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High court favors airing of 'Hello Garci' tapes in still-to-be released ruling

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Los Angeles police's probe of swindling of Manny Pacquiao widens

WORLD / A24
East Timor leader Ramos-Horta still serious but stable

NEWS / A29
Connie Francis here for Valentine's Day concert at Araneta

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED N[illegible] FEARLESS VIEWS
Wednesday, February 13, 2008 [illegible] Vol. 23 / No. 61 P18

THE SUBJECT IS ROSES On Valentine's Day, the subject is as relevant as it is predictable[illegible]

Cha-cha road show begins

Said to be urgent clamor of local gov'ts

By Tony S. Bergonia

FACED WITH RENEWED demands for her to resign, President Macapagal-Arroyo's incumbent allies among governors and local government executives have revived a campaign to amend the Constitution, ostensibly to set up a federal form of government.

The revival of the Charter change proposal coincided with a new scandal over alleged kickbacks in the aborted, $329-million National Broadband Network (NBN) project involving people close to Malacañang.

The campaign to test the water for federalism pushed through yesterday amid reservations from some of Ms Arroyo's allies over the timing of the move to amend the Constitution.

Palace officials, whose involvement will be deep in the campaign, said the next steps of the campaign would be Cebu City today, Bulacan, Feb. 15 and Cagayan de Oro, Feb. 22.

Administration critics said the proposed could lead to an overhaul of the Constitution to remove constraints and keep Ms

FTC For your information, they are starting right now—Cha-cha-cha and the moves to amend the Constitution with a road tour that began in Cebu, according to Albay Gov. Joey Salceda and former Albay Vice Gov. Jaime Calleja at its launching in Legazpi City on Tuesday.

Palace to critics: Moderate your acts

By Michael Lim Ubac, Christine O. Avendaño and Alexis Pajo

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY called on critics of President Macapagal-Arroyo to moderate their call for her to step down, insisting not that she had 4 members to serve until 2010.

Lenlen Bautista, deputy spokesperson of the President, said the Palace respected the right of the people to protest. "However, they should respect their section rest's peaceful actions and discourage any attempt of

Makati Business Club to Neri, Atienza: Resign

By Dianne G. Lucas and Jamaine Aning

THE INFLUENTIAL MAKATI Business Club (MBC) yesterday called on Commission on Higher Education Chair Romulo Neri and Environment Secretary Lito Atienza to resign for their purported roles in trying to prevent Rodolfo Lozada Jr. from testifying in the Senate.

Although the MBC fell short of calling for the resignation of President Macapagal-Arroyo, its executive director, Alberto Lim, was quoted by Reuters as saying: "If the price of good governance is a bit instability, then we pay the price. If a

MANILA SHIELD Cops and soldiers are in place to prevent basic rallyists, or cops like PNP Chief Avelino Razon, from entering the Senate building where Rodolfo Lozada Jr. is scheduled to testify on the NBN-ZTE deal. Soldiers were deployed in Cebu[illegible]

CALL SIGN The Alliance of Concerned Teachers leads militant groups calling for Romulo Neri's resignation during a rally at his CHED office in Pasig City on Tuesday. Also heard is that by now familiar refrain, "Gloria, resign."

NBN-ZTE DEAL

Is GMA involved? Lozada reply: Can I give you a pregnant smile?

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

"CAN I GIVE YOU A PREGNANT smile?" was witness Rodolfo Noel "Sonny" Lozada Jr. said when asked if President Macapagal-Arroyo was part of the "plot" that he was tasked to moderate in the $329-million telecommunications deal with China's ZTE Corp.

Lozada called on Romulo Neri, former chair of the National Economic and Development Authority (Nedaa), to tell the complete story surrounding the aborted National Broadband Network (NBN) project and Ms Arroyo's instructions to him.

He said what Neri told the Senate in his appearance last year was just a preview of the content of the President's involvement in the deal, calling his testimony only a movie "trailer."

Neri had testified that he had reported to the President the alleged attempt of then Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. to bribe him with P200 million to approve the broadband project.

However, Neri refused to disclose what the President ordered him to do after that. He also said in the Supreme Court to stop the Senate from forcing him to testify further, citing executive privilege.

Asked what Neri told her, which could be the key to the ZTE scandal, Lozada said: "I guess the President's instructions to

Joker puts Jun down: He is no Clarissa O

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE QUESTION HAS BEEN raised, "Has the good senator been seduced by the dark side?"

Sen. John Ardee, whose campaign slogan in the May 2007 senatorial elections was "Kapag Bad Ka Lagot Ka," yesterday belittled the credibility of Rodolfo "Boy" Lozada Jr. as a witness, saying he is no Clarissa Ocampo. She presided last Wednesday's hearing conducted by the Senate Committee on Public Services.

A day after his rude outburst

Talk of the town at return of 'The Firm'

By Leila B. Salaverria, Blanche L. Lucas and Nikko Dizon

HIGH TREASON OF THE TOWN, and the high-powered party hosted by one of the country's biggest lawyers proved it.

Probably Most "Sue" Lozada Jr.—an unlikely celebrity himself in an arcane but more on the fate of most of those who attended the Monday night cocktail party of "The Firm" at the Peninsula Manila.

Officially known as the Villaraza, Cruz Marcelo & Angeles law firm headed by Attorney "Pan-

Ang? Villaraza, The Firm was formed? The legal counsel of President Macapagal-Arroyo's family

Guests came from politics and business, from the rich and influential, and the well-connected, and included personalities from the Supreme Court to the military.

Former Makati Business Club executive Jose Atienzo, among those who attended, is hired to The Firm, began his remarks by telling guests: "Tonight, I feel like Imelda Lozada."

Drawing laughter, Atienzo added, in Filipino: "I was a bit

Proud brod recalls Jun a crybaby growing up

By Ephraim Agcaoili and Jayvee T. Gumat

LEMO CITY—A TRICYCLE DRIVER AND ex-car store owner in bankruptcy Thursday said he could have pestered or annoyed the actor, especially because his brother,

Obama will beat McCain, says survey

WASHINGTON—DEMOCRAT Barack Obama would narrowly defeat Republican John McCain if they were matched today in the presidential election, and McCain and Democrat Hillary Rodham Clinton are about even, according to new presidential-race sentiment since the super Tuesday contests.

Obama surpasses Clinton in a matchup against McCain among men, moderates and moderates in an Associated Press-Ipsos poll released Monday.

Clinton does no better than Obama when pitted against McCain among two groups that have supported her in Democratic primaries so far—women and white people.

Clinton's continuing campaign from the prospect of three new Southern States on Tuesday, with Obama hoped to sweep a trio of Presidents-area nominating contests.

Clinton insisted her historic quest was in good shape, despite opinion polls which suggest she will unable to defeat in the OI capital, Maryland and Virginia, after five Obama wins in the weekend.

"I've been around a long time, so, you know, sometimes you're up, sometimes you're down. I've been through all of

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SC favors 'Hello Garci' airing

Still-to-be-released ruling nullifies NTC warning against broadcast stations

By Leila B. Salaverria

WHAT'S INSIDE

GONZALEZ clears 3 review center execs in nursing 'leak' /A4

COMELEC upholds former solon as party-list rep /A4

THE SUPREME COURT HAS RULED IN FAVOR OF the public airing of the so-called "Hello Garci" tapes purportedly containing the wiretapped conversations between President Macapagal-Arroyo and an election official about rigging the 2004 poll results.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez told reporters that Supreme Court Justice Antonio Eduardo Nachura told him yesterday that 9 of the 15 justices voted in favor of the petition filed by former solicitor general Francisco Chavez.

"I called him up to find out what it's all about. He said the voting was 9-6," Gonzalez said.

But Supreme Court spokesperson Jose Midas Marquez declined to confirm the high court's decision but said it would be disclosed on Friday.

"I'm not privy to the conversation of Justice Nachura and Secretary Gonzalez ... The fact is the Justices will still be submitting their respective opinions on Friday after which the final voting will be determined," Marquez said.

Chavez had asked the high court to nullify the order of the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) that warned television and radio stations that their licenses would be canceled if they air the "Hello, Garci" tapes. Chavez had argued that the order violated the freedom of the press.

In the tape, Mr. Arroyo was heard giving orders to then Commission on Elections commissioner Virgilio Garcillano to maximize the lead of her rival, Fernando Poe Jr.

The "Hello, Garci" tape was exposed in 2005 by former National Bureau of Investigation director Samuel Ong who said it was given to him by an agent of Intelligence Services of the Armed Forces of the Philippines who participated in the wiretapping.

In an article posted on its website, NewsWeek magazine said that the Supreme Court voted 9-6 in favor Chavez's petition against the NTC.

The decision is expected to be released Friday, it said.

Newsweek said those who voted in favor were Chief Justice Reynato Puno, Justices Leonardo-Quisumbing, Antonio Carpio, Consuelo Ynares-Santiago, Angelina Gutierrez, Maria Asuncion Martinez, Conchita Carpio-Morales, Adolfo Azcuna and Ruben Reyes.

Those who voted against were Justices Eduardo Nachura, Dante Tinga, Renato Corona, Minita Chico-Nazario, Presbitero Velasco and Teresita Leonardo-de Castro.

Where asked what the votes indicate, Gonzalez said the majority voted against the NTC order.

Marquez said a majority vote in favor of Chavez would indicate that the NTC directive would be scrutinized prior to issuance and thus would be set aside.

Gonzalez said that if the high court decided against the NTC, then they would indicate that the order constituted prior restraint.

"The way I understand it, the Supreme Court seems to have agreed that making a warning sends a chilling effect. But it does not prevent the prosecution for violation of the law," he said.

But Gonzalez added that the high court's ruling does not mean that the government is precluded from filing a case for violation of the anti-wiretapping law, for instance.

He said he wanted to wait for a copy of the high court's decision before making further comments on the issue.

Marquez said the justices met in an en banc session yesterday to discuss the issue. He said a "preliminary vote" was held, but not everyone voted.

He said some of the justices would be writing their opinions on the issue, and these would be submitted to the en banc on Friday which is when the final voting would be known.

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Court rejects gov't plea on Tokyo contract

A PASAY CITY court has denied a government motion questioning its order preventing the transfer of a construction contract for Tokyo property owned by the government to another.

Judge Ma. Rowena Ragsac of Pasay City Regional Trial Court Branch 109 denied for lack of merit the government's motion to set aside the order issued by

No vacancy, no snap polls, says VP Noli

JUNKING CALLS FOR A SNAP election, Vice President Noli de Castro yesterday said he and President Macapagal-Arroyo were not quitting.

"A snap election is held if there's a vacancy in the offices of the President and Vice President. But there's no such vacancy," De Castro said in Filipino, as he emerged from a Cabinet meeting on Malacañang.

Asked repeatedly if he would be willing to take over the presidency if Mrs Arroyo resigned, De Castro answered: "I can't answer that since I will be the beneficiary."

He said it would be best to allow Mrs Arroyo to ascertain whether there was a valid cause for her resign.

Told that some sectors don't want him to succeed Mrs Arroyo, De Castro said: "It's up to them. But we follow constitutional succession. I'm the Vice President, there's nothing they can do about that."

No hurry

But he stressed that he was in no hurry to become President.

"We want the truth to come out. If we allow emotions to control us, that may lead to a wrong outcome, which we will regret in the end. So it's not for me to add to the noise, but observe what will happen next," De Castro said when asked to comment on the ongoing Senate inquiry into the aborted NBN-ZTE deal in which star witness Rodolfo Lozada Jr. suggested that the President was somehow involved.

De Castro disagreed with moves to stop the inquiry, saying that allowing both sides to air their sides would give the public a clearer picture of the issues surrounding the ZTE fiasco.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye reiterated that there was no valid reason to force Mr Arroyo to step down.

"That's out of order and premature," Bunye told reporters yesterday.

Bunye also downplayed reports of restiveness in the military, saying a loyalty check would not be necessary.

"We maintain that majority of the officers and men are loyal to the chain of command," he said.

Bunye denied that the President had extended the term of Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., saying Mr Arroyo had even named Esperon's "possible replacement," Army Chief Lt. Gen. Alexander Yano.

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno has said that Yano would take over as chief of staff on May 9.

De Castro said he supported the Church call for "communal action" as well as former President Corazon Aquino's program of mass offerings in search of the truth behind the NBN-ZTE deal.

"It's okay as long as the rallies or gatherings are peaceful because the truth has to come out. We really need to pray, if necessary everyday so we will know the truth," De Castro said.

De Castro said that he admired Lozada's "guts" in appearing before the Senate and disclosing everything he knows.

'Only human'

"I admire his courage. Not many have that kind of fortitude when you consider that not only his reputation but also his family, his job and his life are at stake. I believe some of what he said are credible but he has more questions to answer," the Vice President said in Filipino.

De Castro said he supported the Senate's investigation as it hoped it would lead to the prosecution of the people responsible.

Asked if the President was affected by the scandal but did not want to show it to public.

"She is only human. But as President, even if she is bothered, she still has to do her duty and she does not want to show that she is hurting," De Castro said.

Meanwhile, ex-Speaker Jose de Venecia yesterday said the President should lead in the cleansing of government even if it would be adverse to the interests of her family.

"Let's give her a chance [to heed] our call for a moral revolution, moral transformation, for moral renewal," De Venecia told reporters.

"Sometimes we take painful decisions that will hurt our family. Sometimes we have to make those painful decisions," he said.

Michael Lim Ubay, Cynthia D. Balana and Norman Bordadora

Yulo tillers hold picket at Senate

By Jocelyn Ablog

FARMERS FROM the old Hacienda Yulo in Laguna picketed the Senate yesterday to protest the confirmation of the appointment of Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman.

The Commission on Appointments conducted hearings on Pangandaman's appointment yesterday.

A total of 179 farmers, members of the Hacienda Yulo Farmers Association INC-BUA and their supporters marched from Caloocan City five days ago to protest what they said were efforts of the Yulo family to subvert land distribution by converting big parcels of the 7,200-hectare estate into commercial and residential areas.

In 2006, DAR filed a petition with the JAB to nullify the conversion order granted to the Yulos for a 982-hectare property. In December 2007, however, Pangandaman denied their petition, saying it had been filed too late.

Gonzalez clears 3 review center execs in nursing 'leak'

By Lolo B. Saberon

JUSTICE SECRETARY RAUL GONZALEZ has cleared officials of a nursing review center of charges that they leaked questions to examinees during the 2006 nursing licensure examination, justifying the recommendation of a panel of prosecutors.

In a resolution dated Feb. 5, Gonzalez ordered the charges of manipulation and corrupt practices committed—if any were filed—against Nilrode Gopal Jr., Mr. Elmer Abrenica and Jessie Bocol. The three are officials and employees of the R.A. Gopal Review Center.

But Gonzalez affirmed the panel's findings of liability against George Cortiñas, president of the Junior Pershing Center and former president of the Philippine Nurses Association.

He also upheld the dismissal of the complaint against officials of a third review center.

The discovery then broke in two subjects in the June 2006 nursing licensure examinations gave rise to a months-long controversy that resulted the course and led to the postponement of the oath-taking of the passers.

The Court of Appeals ordered a partial release of the exams, to cover the two subjects, included surgical nursing or "Set B" and psychiatric nursing or "Set C."

The controversy attracted international attention, with the United States-based Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS International) announcing that Filipino nurses who were licensed after passing of the June 2006 exams would and be issued visas to work in the US.

The result was that most of the passers, not wishing to jeopardize their chance to work in the US, opted to retake Exam B and C or the entire exam during the retake conducted the following June.

In absolving the three R.A. Gopal officials of liability, Gonzalez said the only evidence presented against them was the "transcription" but their testimonies were found with the leaked questions on the day of the exams.

He added that the "arbitrariness of a witness linking R.A. Gopal to the leakage was based on the witness seeing the examinees wearing jackets with the review center's logo.

"Evidence failed to show that Gopal Review has an axis of having manipulated the BLEE (the Nursing Licensure Examination). The grading system in their alleged leaked materials were distributed by Gopal Review to their reviewees was not decisive," he said.

He pointed out that had the Gopal officials known of the leaked questions, they should have distributed these to their other review center to other parts of the country.

He said that Bocol's coaching version of R.A. Gopal and in "forwarding of probable questions and answers" in the exam were apparently part of normal practice among review centers.

The prosecutors' panel, in a resolution released in August 2007, found R.A. Gopal officials liable based on the statements of two reviewees who said that the day before the exam, review materials comprising the Test Cs in the licensure exam were distributed in the Gopal review center in Baguio. They said they learned later that the materials contained actual questions.

In upholding the panel's findings against Gonzalez, Gonzalez said the know offered told reviewees during official coaching session in Hi Hotels that 100 out of 300 questions shown to them would be asked during the exam.

Based on the declaration of respondent, it is evident that the fact that the leaks of the challenge questions for he made the announcement of tuition does refund for those who would top the examination. Such confidence of respondent clearly implies that all the questions (that) I know. But who would discuss would be answered in the examination," he said.

He also pointed out that Gonzalez declined to fix the reviewers at leaves, and that the National Bureau of Investigation found that the discs contained the power point presentations shown during the review session.

"In court the complainant and respondent had ordered signed a manipulated the recalled NLEX ... There is a likelihood that respondent knew of the questions to be asked in the day of the examination," said Gonzalez.

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Comelec upholds former solon as party-list rep

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS HAS reorganized Abigail Bunding president, Dequesto Ombid, as the legislative representative of the party-list group in the House of Representatives.

In a resolution dated Feb. 5, the Comelec en banc, recognized the legitimacy of Ombid as Abigail president, and ruled that he and his other nominees for Congress Edgar Mortiz, Mr. Dominic Rimas Andres, and Hill Bicker to were the real nominees of Abigail, one of 13 party-list groups that garnered the required two percent vote to win a seat in Congress.

The Comelec cancelled the accreditation of the other Abigail list that had Ms Norlaila Mar-cordes, Alfredo Maderio Amado C. Mendoza, Horacio S. Cabling and Hilgo as the 1, Reps.

The resolution affirmed a July 2007 ruling of the Comelec First Division on the same matter.

"The Certificate of Nomination of the Party Abigail represented by Alberto M. Mallare ... is hereby set aside. The Memorandum of Intent to Participate in the Party-list System of Representation submitted by Abigail, represented by its legitimate president Dequesto S. Ombid ... is hereby admitted," the Comelec said.

Despite the ruling, the Comelec has yet to proclaim Ombid to the party-list representative in Congress.

Mandeles appealed the ruling with the Supreme Court last Feb. 7. Beverly L. Antiporda

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, February 13, 2008
1st Week of Lent

1st Reading: Jon 3:1-10
Gospel: Lk 11:29-32

At the entertainment, Jesus began to speak to this way, "People of this present time are evil people. They ask for a sign, but no sign will be given them except the sign of Jonah. As Jonah became a sign for the people of Nineveh, so will the Son of Man be a sign for this generation. The Queen of the South will rise up on Judgment Day with the people of these times and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and here there is greater than Jonah."

Comment on:

The word "prophet" means "one who speaks for another." The prophet Jonah had a powerful impact upon the people of Nineveh because he was speaking for God. Even the most sinful of the Ninevites did possess at least one virtue.

Jesus is far greater than Jonah because he not only "speaks for" God, He is the Word of God made flesh, dwelling among us. Reading this Lenten season, may your daily reading of the Bible open your heart even more to the Word of God who is Jesus Christ. May the Word find a dwelling place in your heart.

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Joker puts Jun down: He is no Clarissa

From page A1

dragged into the National Broadband Network (NBN) mess, drawn out the resignations of the chief executive engineers before a Senate inquiry into over-$200-million broadband deal, and produced documentary evidence to back up his charges of a grand corruption and cover-up by the administration.

Arroyo refused to talk about how Lozada talks tied him in Manila's hacking, claiming that it was a "private matter" with his wife.

Replying to a lecture from Arroyo, Lozada claimed that not only opposition senators had tried to contact him but that for about two months Arroyo's own lawyer, Felipe Aquino, along with publicist Tony Abaya, attempted to "bribe" and blackmail Lozada to testify against Neri.

Abaya said in a radio interview that if it were Lozada and former Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri who caught the secrets of Arroyo's rush to become Loyola's wife insisted on not appearing in the Senate probe, Lozada would have to be "cut down to size."

"I'm not going to play to the gallery or curdle and Dalhousie my statements to please them. I've always been my own person. I'm not like those others who attack the Pressidential spokesman," Lozada said.

"For all we know what he is telling is true, but from a jurist's point of view, we have to look at it objectively. I'm not prepared to say that what he said is wrong. I have to look at the transcript," Arroyo said in a press conference.

"When you hear it, it sounds good. But once you read the transcript you only get inconsistencies," he said.

The Senate hearing will resume on Monday. Senate investigators are expected to go to the Mercury Aquino International Airport (Naia) 1 to re-enact the alleged kidnapping of Lozada on his return from Hong Kong on Feb. 5. Lozada had spent a week in Hong Kong on advice of Bishop Oscar Cruz following his request not to testify before the Senate for fear that he could not be.

Arroyo said that based on his experience as past chairs of the Senate blue ribbon committee, finishing a report was more difficult than the actual hearing because senators tend to make it conclusion based on the evidence submitted.

He said senators only have the word and views of a disgruntled builder and his agent that the project with China's ZTE Corp. was padded to accommodate the hefty $130-million commission being demanded by Business Committee on Electoral Chief Benjamin Abalos.

"We have testimony from Joey de Venecia that the project is overpriced but we only have his own statements for that. Lozada speaks as if he is an expert witness, and whatever he says should be considered as evidence," Arroyo said.

"Somebody has to qualify him first as an expert witness. What value will we give to his testimony without documentation evidence? I'm not saying he has no credibility, but how can you do a reasonable report. Everything is cut," he said.

Estrada trial

In Estrada's impeachment trial, Arroyo noted that Ocampo was found credible because "she was not involved with the Estrada government or participated in any deal, she just witnessed from one desk away how President Estrada signed his name as Jose Velarde."

Ocampo had an envelope containing evidence of the Velarde account, which, after pro-Estrada senators blocked its opening, triggered the People Power II or Edsa that ousted Estrada in 2001.

"Lozada says there is an exception and we must accept what he says without any evidence?" said Arroyo, a House prosecutor in the Estrada impeachment.

He said that what struck him the most about Lozada's testimony was his statement that the project would have pushed through without any kinks had Abalos' alleged commission been reduced to $65 million.

Perception of reality flawed

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, an administration senator like Arroyo, concurred in Arroyo's assessment of Lozada. "In this case, his perception of reality is flawed and you will need an expert witness to examine his actions," Santiago said.

Just like in previous Senate investigations that have not led to any resolution, lawyers does not expect anything to come out of the NBN-ZTE probe.

Arroyo raised the Mindanao rice-corn area project for computerized elections, the Iris in Terminal 3 controversy, the Northrail issue, the fertilizer fiasco, the overpriced Diosdado Macapagal highway.

He said nothing had come out of Senate investigations of these controversies because they were either dismissed or the prosecution agency did not bother to pursue the cases.

Arroyo said that compared to the NBN-ZTE, the North Luzon Railways project was more expensive and more tainted as its overprice. "It's $500 million for 40 kilometers of single track," he said.

The Senate is planning to review investigation of the Northrail project which some senators charged was packaged by Rep. Jose de Venecia, the father of the losing bidder in 1999 deal.

'Seduced by the dark side'

"It was not an opposition, will you take the opposition side even if they are wrong? So we're in, so on. But are not reports that we will follow them," said Arroyo, who has been criticized for "hovering" by Neri in an executive session during the Official's June public appearance in the Senate.

Rafael Mariano, chair of the Silicong Maghehelad ng Pilipinas, said Arroyo should stop baffling Lozada.

"He should also look and feel the amusement of the public on that one as his he completely turned out to be the offspring by the Macapagal-Arroyo regime to descend it and destroy Lozada," Mariano added.

"Has the good student been seduced by the dark side?"

Proud brod recalls ...

From page A1

Rodolfo 'Boo' 'Jun' Lozada Jr., became a vice witness in the proposed $329-million National Broadband Network (NBN) deal.

Guillermo, whose his brother appeared on national television for his second appearance at the Senate hearing on the controversial deal, Lozada Jr., 52, said he was moved to tears every time his younger brother cried in the hearing.

Crying at the drop of ...

"He a child that usually cry when we told him things when we played jokes on him, or when he lost in our childhood games," Samson said.

He said he was proud that his brother was exposing the truth. "He could easily pass for lawyer," he said.

He said it was up to the public to judge his brother. "But one thing I am sure of, we were not raised to be sons-bitch," Samson said.

He expressed the hope that people would be moved by his brother's revelations.

He described his younger brother as very kind and helpful.

"He was a simple and silent boy," said Samson, who is also a graduate of BSB among the 13 children of Rodolfo, now 84 years old, and the late Rodolfo Lozada Sr.

Chinese school in Legazpi

Samson said Jun grew up with the hustle in Ligao not studied in grade school at Chong Hua, a Chinese school in Legazpi City.

"He was a simple guy in school. He was never boastful and he did not use rights against, not even his siblings," Samson said.

He said Jun's daily life during his childhood revolved around school and the house. "After classes he went home. He certainly chose his friends," he said.

Samson said he never knew about his brother's involvement in the controversial deal until he watched at a press conference last week.

"The last time we saw each other was last Christmas when one of our siblings died. He would also come from Ilocos to Ligao City during family occasions but he never mentioned anything about the issues," he said.

Samson said the family was not about Jun's safety and feared he might suffer the fate of their sixth sibling, who was killed by policemen due to mistaken identity.

Samson described the Lozadas as closely knit. "We were one family. We were properly raised by our parents. We enjoyed a simple life," he said.

Drug store

The Lozadas own a drug store and a grocery near Ligao Bridge.

"They are good and religious people who are very private. They never get involved in local politics even if they were well-off," said a public school teacher at the Ligao West Central School, who claimed to be a distant relative of the Lozadas' but declined to be named.

To the left of City Hall stands a chain of small convenience stores, one of which is said to be managed and manned after hours by Lozada's aunts, Ma. Imperial.

On Friday afternoon, when Lozada made his first appearance in the Senate, it was evident that the staff of the store was uneasy when quizzed by reporters about the whereabouts of Lozada's immediate family.

Mum's the word

Asked about the Imperial family, they politely refused to say so, silently swaying at the cash register, while they reluctantly identified as the store owner's sister and one of Lozada's aunts.

The chunky-eyed, grey-haired woman curtly gave her name: Lydia.

But when asked if she really was a relative of Lozada's or if she was familiar with him, she meekly replied in Bicol: "I don't know" and "I don't know anything about that." All the while she avoided eye contact.

Asked where her sister Pet. Imperial was, she said in Bicol: "She is sick," a rebuttal confirmed that, saying: "She is taking upstairs." Both of them, however, refused to have Pet. talk to anyone.

Asked where her other relative were, the elderly woman would reiterate her previous replies, or just shrug and shake her head resolutely.

When prodded about Lozada, she would stare at the television set showing a sometime program, and refuse to acknowledge the question.

But, nevertheless, recommended restaurants slowly.

At the mayor's office, the younger staff could not offer to be anxious about Lozada either.

"We heard that Lozada was from around here, but we're not really familiar with him or his family," one of them said.

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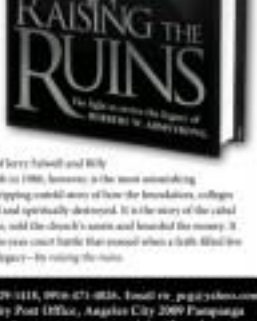

WHAT HAPPENED to the global humanitarian empire of Herbert W. Armstrong, one of the foremost religious leaders of the 20th century? During the 1980s, Armstrong's work was bigger than those of Jerry Falwell and Billy Graham combined. What happened after his death in 1986, however, is the most astonishing story in modern religion. Here is the shocking, gripping untold story of how the foundations, colleges and church he founded were doctrinally hijacked and spiritually destroyed. It is the story of the cabal of leaders who trashed his work, silenced his voice, sold the church's assets and hoarded the money. It is also the inspiring story of the life and death, six-year court battle that ensued when a faith-filled few held fast to his mission and sought to defend his legacy—by raising the ruins.

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Obama will beat McCain ...

From page A1

that," the former first lady said.

Clinton's campaign operatives said they were now pinning their hopes on Ohio and Texas, big states where she is up in March 4, to close the undisputed gap with the surging Obama.

Obama now leads Clinton 1,144 to 1,100, to the running delegate count, according to the website RealClearPolitics.com. A total of 1,025 delegates are needed for the Democratic nomination.

But he is also ahead in the hotly contested Clinton with 1,147 delegates compared to 1,124 for Obama, including so-called superdelegates—party leaders not chosen at primaries or caucuses and who are free to change their minds.

Male vote split

Recent primaries and Mitt Romney's departure from the Republican race have made McCain the heavy favorite to win final party's presidential nomination.

Where Clinton is poised against McCain in a general election matchup, Obama gets 46 percent to McCain's 48 percent, a heads-up contest in the poll. Obama edges McCain, a 15-minute from winning, 48 percent to 42 percent in their pairing.

One reason McCain holds his own against Clinton is his support from men, who prefer him to the New York senator by 9 percentage points. That compares with her 11-point advantage among women.

Obama does better than Clinton with men when paired against McCain, splitting the male vote with the dubious senator.

Women's vote crucial

Obama does especially well with men under 45: He defeats McCain by 9 points among younger men, while McCain defeats Clinton with those voters by 7 points.

Meanwhile, Obama's advantage over McCain among women is about the same as Clinton's, blunting her edge in a group that has been the core of her strength in her fight for the Democratic nomination.

Women favor Obama over McCain by 11 points and favor Clinton over McCain by 11.

Obama split 74 percent of the votes of minorities when paired against McCain, 7 points lower than Clinton.

Black vote

Echoing a problem seen in most Democratic primaries so far, Obama does better than Clinton among black people, while she attracts slightly more support from Hispanics.

Yet among whites, who have preferred Clinton to Obama in most Democratic contests this year, she has no advantage when each is paired against McCain. Both get 37 percent of whites' backing, trailing McCain substantially.

The findings that underscores both Hillary Clinton's core-party appeal and the bitterness of the fight for the Democratic nomination, about one-third of Obama's supporters picked McCain when asked their preference in a Clinton-McCain general election matchup.

Where women overwhelmingly favor Clinton while white men are split evenly between the two Democrats. And in age differential pattern: Clinton wins older women overall, while Obama gets younger women.

The survey was conducted from Feb. 7-10 and involved telephone interviews with 1,029 adults. It had an overall margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points. Reports from AP and AFP

2 Landoil execs acquitted in ₱7-M Owwa fund mess

By TJ Burgonio

THE SANDIGANBAYAN HAS acquitted two former executives of the Landoil Resources Corp. (Landoil) and Greater Manila Land Corp. (GMLC) on charges that they defrauded the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (Owwa) of almost ₱7 million in 1983.

Hipolito Feleno and Hilarion Mendoza, former senior vice presidents of Landoil/GMLC, were charged with the then Owwa administrator Salvador Bigay in a graft case filed by the Ombudsman in 2002. Landoil and GMLC are construction companies.

The antigraft court dismissed the case against Feleno and Mendoza on Feb. 4.

Bigay died in May 2002, but the court still gave due course to the case as he was arraigned two months before his death.

Two other Landoil/GMLC executives, vice president Roland Sibulbano and SVP Alfredo V. Antipolo, who were also charged, remain at large.

All five were accused of conspiring to defraud Owwa of some ₱6.7 million. The amount was loaned to the Landoil/GMLC between Sept. 30 and Oct. 3, 1983.

Prosecutors said that Owwa had released the loan even if Bigay was aware that the collateral that Landoil/GMLC had put up, a 41,887-square meter property valued at ₱6 million, was insufficient.

They also discovered that 23 of the 40 titles covering the property were also mortgaged by Landoil/GMLC to Mid Shore Finance and Investment Inc. in April 1981, or over a ₱1 million shortfall.

The defendants said the ₱6.7 million was used to fund the repatriation of 300 Filipino overseas workers trapped in Libya after the Libyan government canceled the projects of Landoil/GMLC.

Palace to critics: Moderate your acts

Arroyo, p. A2

any group to sue or be used to destabilize the government. We should all exercise sobriety and tolerance in approaching the excesses of certain individuals and groups," she told reporters.

Pagsisihan said certain statements were favoring actions Pushit de Lozada (Lozada's nickname) and Broadband Network (NBN) deal with Chinese ZTE Corp.

She said the Senate investigations had "not directly linked the presidency" to the many-anguled deal "in any way or use of the circumstances."

She added: "Remember and the belief of linking the Pres[illegible] to the scandal is so severe for her to resign."

Call for reforms

As the controversy over the NBN-ZTE deal continued to simmer, Mr. Arroyo announced a directive to her officials to pursue reforms with the help of the Church and the private sector.

She said these reforms were initiated to address the problem of graft and corruption and cut red tape in the bureaucracy, which, she noted, were what ordinary Filipinos and investors had been complaining about.

"I am directing the Anti-Red Tape Task Force of [illegible] from the Public and the Private sectors, Transparency Group of Budget Inventory Heavy Airdays to collaborate with the private institutions sectors, academe and Church for reforms in the system of government," Ms. Arroyo said in her opening statement of yesterday's Cabinet meeting.

She said this was among the measures that her administration was undertaking to protect the Philippines' strong economy from the threats posed by the slowdown of the global economy.

Reminder

But Palace officials said the directives "did nothing to do with the issues of bribery and corruption in the NBN-ZTE project.

In his testimony at the Senate last week, Lozada cited first the procurement system, in government as "dysfunctional."

But Bunye told reporters Ms. Arroyo's directives were just a "reminder reminder" of her previous directives, and not in response to Lozada's testimony.

"From time to time, the President reviews the progress that concerned agencies are making in regards to previous directives," he said.

He explained, he said, in yesterday's Cabinet meeting, Ms. Arroyo issued a directive to relax assembly rules rules in the deployment of Filipino hired for white-collar jobs abroad. He said the aim is for the early but previous instructions to cut red tape so as to facilitate the flow of [illegible] to [illegible].

"The President has always been consistent," Bunye said.

Archbishop Angel Lagdameo said the Arroyo administration "has many of saying that we have yet to place safeguards in the procurements system before Lozada came out."

Transparency group

He said the Procurement Transparency Group (PTG), which he heads, was created last year by Ms. Arroyo to link the government with the private sector to ensure transparency in government procurement.

Archbishop said the PTG had dozens civil society groups to nominate members who would act as observers in the various bids and awards committees of government agencies.

He named the civil groups as the Bishops-Businessmen's Conference, Transparency and Accountability Network, Makati Business Club, Ateneo Government Watch, Confederation of Filipino Consultants and Procurement Watch Inc.

"The coverage of the government is: We're asking people to volunteer to watch over public funds. The public will be involved," Archbishop said in the interview.

He said the PTG was made up of the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission, National Economic and Development Authority, the justice, budget and finance departments, and five nongovernment organizations.

'Singing an old tune'

Press secretary Ignacio Bunye said the Palace was not alarmed by the big protest action planned by militant groups on Friday.

"I do not know. He'll say, 'I don't know. He'll say, 'I'm sad,' adding that calls by another "people power" agitating to topple the Arroyo administration were like "singing an old tune."

Bunye also said there was a dwindling number of protesters as the streets became "the people power people, nothing and despite the political noise, our President has the capacity to lead the nation, as evidenced by improving economy."

At any rate, the military and police are on their toes, according to officials.

Task Force Manila Shield

The Philippine National Police has activated Task Force Manila Shield in anticipation of mass actions in support of Lozada.

Director Jesus Versoza said the force, the PNP spokesperson, said the task force would guard against forces from the Left and Right that might "take advantage" of the protest actions to rein chaos and overthrow the administration.

Interior-secretary declared that the 125,000-strong PNP remained solidly behind the chain of command.

He said the task force would mobilize counter-troops and deploy police patrols, and that the PNP intelligence Group would first up monitoring of the protesting groups.

Bayan MUN chair Andrew Andrade called on the Senate to look into other foreign-funded flagship projects, such as the Cavanaugh Firebird Project, operation of railroad roads, and privatization of ports and boat transports.

He said the projects had led to the violent demolition of squatter communities and relocation of urban poor residents, and that about 150,000 families would be dislocated by the projects.

Gadi Addo: "Given these circumstances, we have no option but to rise against the Arroyo administration, as the key implementer of the corrupt projects. We hereby take up the revolutionary challenge of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines to confront [illegible] and [illegible]."

SOMETIMES'S trailing President Arroyo on the telecomwar scandal to present at the opening of the Manila-Cabanatuan-Group meeting on Tuesday at the Agricultural Center. Some Disney Reserve the Palace. With Mrs. Arroyo are acting Mayor Director General Angelo Santos (standing) and PNP-chief Cargo Reyes[illegible].

PNP: Ready for any threats

MAJ. GEN. FERNANDO Mesa, chief of the Armed Forces' National Capital Region Command, assured reporters that there was "nothing to worry about."

"You seen it quiet. We have not conditioned any reinforcement. The detailed-dismissal is being going on as [ha]," he said, adding:

"I always tell our soldiers that we should always strengthen and follow the chain of command because [illegible] coordinate to the [illegible] of our country's stability."

Mesa also said that "for as long as [peace actions are] within the bounds of the law [illegible] everybody."

But he admitted that the military was monitoring groups that would join the protest actions: "We are watching them because if they will provoke violence, that violence will not be mine."

He also said he and his unit was ready to meet any threat in the metropolis. "We have a reasonable size of forces in Metro Manila. If there are people who will use violence, the full force of the law will be brought to bear on them."

Director Geary Barias, chief of the National Capital Region Police Office, said the NCRPO was prepared for any threat during the mass actions, but that he expected only a thousand protesters on Friday.

"We will make sure everything will be peaceful but in case there will be violence, [illegible] rally will turn out peaceful. We know the rallies are part of the opposition's call for the ouster of the President, but the NCRPO is prepared for that," Barias said.

He said the NCRPO would allow only a few hundred for the rallies from the commander Hour People's home.

4 years

According to Pajarillo, the President is mandated under the Constitution to complete her fixed term of six years, "and that is what she intends to do."

"We think that the opposition will just wait until 2010," she said, reiterating Bunye's statement on Monday that Baker officials were "fine in our belief and on our mind that the President has a mandate up to 2010."

Pajarillo called on Ms. Arroyo's critics to unite to fight poverty. "Disunity and discord will only bring us country down from the gains we have all achieved," she said.

Emerging from the Cabinet meeting, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said that "of course," the Arroyo administration was prepared to face any eventuality, including a purported bank destabilization attempt.

'Nervous'

He said the renewed call for Ms. Arroyo to step down, take a leave of absence or call a "snap" election were "only raising off from what's ... going on in the Senate."

As for the planned big protest action on Friday, Ermita said the Palace was monitoring developments outside the Senate as well.

"Well, if it is organized by the opposition, you can always be sure that this will be taken advantage of by the opposition. It is something that's still normal as far as politics is concerned," he said.

Makati Business Club to Neri, Atienza: Resign

Arroyo, p. A2

means a change of regime, by all means let's go through the polls before we get the pain. We don't stand on a very shaky political foundation."

In a statement, the faculty of the University of the Philippines denounced Neri's resignation as [illegible].

"They said Neri had become both a functionary and a beneficiary of a hopelessly corrupt system."

"That he went to such great lengths to evade the truth in order to protect his patron highlights him clearly as the latter's cronies," they said.

Militant and civil society groups have entered the streets, Stop Down Movement (SDM). On broad coalition under which they will be rearticulating on Friday in protest vehicle to demand Neri's resignation from the government.

The groups said they would hold not only more protests but also public meetings to allow the people to discuss the issues in the $329-million National Broadband Network (NBN) deal between the Arroyo administration and China's ZTE Corp.

In a press conference, Lim read the group's statement calling on Arroyo and Neri "to save themselves from further shame by resigning their positions in government for their respective roles in the attempt to prevent Mr. Lozada from testifying."

Feeding nation's guilts

"Their protection at any cost of the interests of those in power renders them unworthy of the people's trust," said the umbrella organization of the Philippines' progressive groups.

The MBC has a long history of political activism, its last major foray being a call for Mr. Arroyo to step down in 2005, in the wake of the "Hello Garci" election. Noted scandal. (Related story on Page A8.)

The chairperson, Lim said, it is clear that the group was not calling on Mr. Arroyo to resign. But he said it would "welcome" a change in the current regime.

"If we will call on the President to resign and so on, it does not call back-pressure. We have to be a little sensitive about how we will approach things like this," Lim told reporters.

"What we're doing is we're hearing the pulse of the nation. The corruption is still there, and I think some [cases] are worse now. And I think it would be folly to hold with our chin," he said.

Response to Church call

The MBC was first formed at the height of the "Hello Garci" scandal. It has been revived to make the Arroyo administration accountable for the NBN-ZTE scandal, according to Bagong Alyansang Makabayan secretary general Renato Reyes.

"Our rally is our response to the Catholic Church's call for continued action. We will bring people together to express their outrage, and we hope this will not be construed as destabilization by the government," he told the business.

Reyes said the MBC's reply to the Church's call would not be limited to street protests in Makati City and elsewhere. He said Bayan and its affiliates would conduct public meetings and other gatherings in schools, factories, urban areas and the countryside so the people could discuss the aborted NBN-ZTE project and air their resentments.

"The [mass] meetings are considering valuable contribution to the public. This will contribute to the consciousness of the [illegible]. People would want to know what they can do, and tell us to say that it won't be long before we see big demonstrations," Reyes said, referring to the protests in the wake of the Hello Garci' scandal," Reyes said.

About 140 members of Bayan's National Capital Region chapter held an initial protest at commemorative along the Philippine-Nevada Road near the Embassies in Ermita, Manila.

'Miraga' of growth

They hanged pots, pans and pikers to symbolize "the country's social and economic ruin, that the government is under taking such foreign incentives."

The MBC statement also took a swipe at the Philippines' supposed macroeconomic gains, which it said the Palace had relayed to serve its political interests.

"The perceived gains have been a sore point between the MBC and the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI), which is supportive of Ms. Arroyo's administration.

"As business people, we cannot concede ourselves to the strength of the peso and the ratings of its equitable growth. These are ephemeral gains that have not translated into a better life for most Filipinos," the MBC said.

It added: "What is being accompanied is the moral fabric of our society. It is not a question of quality; instead, it is a matter of greed, old-fashioned dishonesty and [illegible] immorality.

"We call on all Filipinos to proclaim, 'Tama na ang kasinungalingan! Sobra na ang kasakiman!' Mamulat tayo sa, Bayan! (Stop the lying! The greed is too much! Stand for principles!)."

Solo flight

Lim said that the MBC was bound to issue the statement alone, while the boards of other Makati-based business groups—the Management Association of the Philippines (MAP) and Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines (Finex)—failed to agree on a common statement.

The leaders of the three business groups met last weekend to hammer out the statement, but MAP and Finex did not join yesterday's press conference.

"They normally co-sign with us, but we feel that we have to move from this time," Lim said.

He said the MBC statement had the approval of its board of directors, but the group's members were free from seated on the statement.

He added that some members wanted the MBC to make an outright call for Mr. Arroyo's resignation, and that other members were against issuing any statement at all.

The MBC statement also lauded Lozada's expose, praised his courage, and proclaimed him "a credible witness."

"We support the Senate's continued pursuit of the truth behind the NBN project," the group said.

"We must see to it that those who are revealed to have benefited from its conduct how high up, must be made to account for their transgressions."

Support, not lead

The United Opposition (UNO) still not take the initiative to hold protest actions demanding Mr. Arroyo's resignation, Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Manny Villar (Nacionalista Party) said.

Pimentel said the protest actions but we will support any group and will be there," Bunye, he said, adding that UNO would not act on its own "but would be a part of a broader coalition."

He said the coalition would move today "to discuss how we can make people understand

further the issues of conditional conception by Chris Macapagal-Arroyo and her family."

"People power rises and happens overnight. It is our duty to fully explain to the people what is going on," Bunye said.

He mentioned the civil society group, Black and White Movement, as among the members of the coalition expected to attend the meeting.

"Now is the time to make a stand. Let us all remember that the Philippines is for Filipinos and not [only] for the Arroyos," said Bunye, a one of ousted President Joseph Estrada.

Direct implication

The League of Filipino Students and the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT) also called for Neri's ouster.

"We must join our call ONLY and not disunited that he be held accountable for his role in the NBN-ZTE deal," said ACT chairman Antonio Tinio.

Yesterday, some ACT members from UP Polytechnic University of the Philippines and Rafaelo "Amang" Rodriguez Institute of Science and Technology (PUP-RIST) picketed the ONLY headquarters in Pasig City to demand Neri's resignation.

Dismissive of critics

But Neri dismissed his critics' moves as "rather political."

He refused the call to leave his post this week, but according to the UP faculty his term as ONLY chair has been reduced to August.

In Malacañang, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the call for the resignation of Neri and Abalos is not "serious matter."

Bunye said the two officials could very well defend themselves.

Nevertheless, he said the Supreme Court should be given time to resolve Neri's petition that he not be forced to appear before the NBN-ZTE deal.

So far Attorney Bunye said the executive department had advised the way he did "in the interest of national issues."

"And to effect, he acted in good faith," Bunye said. With reports from Nancy C. Carvajal, Jerry E. Esplanada and Christine O. Avendaño

Who's who at Friday's protest rally

LEADERS OF MANY AFFILIATES—the labor group Kilusang Mayo Uno and the Bohol-folk group Bonakidungo—have begun organizing their members for Friday's rally.

Also joining the rally are the group Gabriela, Filipino Rights Building Philippines, the Health Alliance for Democracy, a group of activists in the health sector, and the government workers group Confederation for Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees (Courage).

Direct hiring rules amended

By Marjoe C. Ortiz and Jerome Aning

THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT (DOLE) has amended its memorandum circular providing new regulations for the direct hiring of overseas Filipino workers after the controversial rules drew protests from migrant workers groups.

Labor Secretary Arturo Brion yesterday announced that foreign employers who are required by their respective governments to guarantee "performance and honesty" of OFWs would be exempted from paying the required regular rates and performance bonds specified in Memorandum Circular No. 4.

Brion said the amendment was made after some Philippine Overseas Labor Offices (POLOs) abroad confirmed that a number of foreign governments including those in hotspots Kuwait and Hong Kong require their citizens to ensure the payment of salaries and benefits to OFWs.

"As a result of the confirmations, the Governing Board of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) in a meeting last week agreed to exempt foreign employers in countries where OFWs are assured of these protective mechanisms," Brion said in a statement.

"The POEA has also been directed to amend Memorandum Circular No. 4 to provide for the exemption," he added.

Under the memorandum circular, foreign employers are required to provide a $165,000 repatriation bond and performance bond equivalent to three months salary of the OFW.

The requirements aim to strengthen the protective mechanisms for OFWs, Brion said.

"Experience in Canada and Singapore exempted from the payment of the bonds since their country already imposes sufficient welfare protection for foreign workers," Brion said.

He added that POLOs in 35 cities all over the world with a high concentration of OFWs have been asked to confirm with the DOLE whether the foreign governments in their areas of jurisdiction require the implementation of protection mechanisms for OFWs.

Members of the local recruitment industry have demanded for the immediate recall of the memorandum circular.

The Center for Migrant Advocacy yesterday joined calls for the POEA to scrap the new guidelines on direct hiring because of many "problems" hindering its successful implementation.

"I do not see how the POEA will be able to successfully implement it. This is a classic example of a government policy that was formulated and is being implemented without the benefit of adequate consultation with the affected sector—the overseas Filipino workers themselves," said CFMA legal counsel Henry Sujo.

Supreme Court of the Philippines
Judicial and Bar Council
Manila

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Judicial and Bar Council (JBC) announces that:

I. Pursuant to its policy and practice, the following first five qualified Presiding and Associate Justices of the Court of Appeals are automatically considered for nomination for the position of ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT vice **Hon. Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez** (who will compulsorily retire on 28 February 2008): Presiding Justice **CONRADO M. VASQUEZ, JR.**; and Associate Justices **PORTIA ALIÑO-HORMACHUELOS**, **MARTIN S. VILLARAMA, JR.**, **ANDRES B. REYES, JR.**; and **REMEDIOS SALAZAR-FERNANDO**. The other candidates are Secretary **ARTURO D. BRION**, Justice **GREGORY S. ONG**; Justice **EDILBERTO G. SANDOVAL** and Justice **FRANCISCO H. VILLARUZ, JR.** All of them were interviewed either in March or October 2007.

II. The following Associate Justices of the Sandiganbayan are the candidates for the position of PRESIDING JUSTICE OF THE SANDIGANBAYAN vice **Hon. Teresita L. De Castro** (who was appointed as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court on 1 December 2007) and will be publicly interviewed at the Division Hearing Room, Ground Floor, New Supreme Court Building, on 5 March 2008 (Wednesday):

9:00 A.M. - 12:00 NOON	2:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.
1. ESTRADA, MA. CRISTINA CORTEZ	1. SANDOVAL, EDILBERTO G.
2. ONG, GREGORY S.	2. VILLARUZ, FRANCISCO, JR. H.
3. PERALTA, DIOSDADO M.	

The public may submit sworn complaint, written report, or opposition against any of the aforesaid candidates for the positions of Supreme Court Associate Justice and Sandiganbayan Presiding Justice **NOT LATER THAN 25 FEBRUARY 2008 (Monday)** to the JBC Secretariat, 2nd Flr. Centennial Bldg., Supreme Court, Padre Faura St., Manila (Tel. No. 552-9512; Fax No. 552-9538; e-mail address **jbc_supremecourt@yahoo.com.ph**).

12 February 2008.

MA. LUISA D. VILLARAMA
Clerk of Court & JBC
Ex Officio Secretary

JDV ousted due to mismanagement, says Villafuerte

By TJ Burgonio and Norman Bordadora

SEN. JOSE DE VENECIA 3RD OUSTED as Speaker for mismanaging the House of Representatives, not because his son blew the whistle on the $329-million national broadband network deal, said Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte.

In a privilege speech yesterday, Villafuerte recommend Jer Treneas's "use of overstatement and strategy" that he said paralyzed his downfall.

"Some sectors continue to persist in their erroneous view that the matter of Speaker de Venecia is the result of the revelations by the Senate by the Speaker's son, Joey de Venecia, on the NBN project," he said.

But in reality, his ouster was the "consequence of accumulated grievances by the majority of congressmen because of his use of intimidation or coercion" which he refused to comply.

De Venecia was voted out by more than 170 lawmakers, including the two sons of President Macapagal-Arroyo, and replaced by Rizalo Cdr. Rep. Prospero Nograles in a plenary vote last Tuesday.

Villafuerte said De Venecia was replaced for acts of mismanagement, malpractice and irregularities.

Chief among these was De Venecia's failure to prepare a legislative agenda for every regular session, as House rules provide.

"The current session began in July 2007, as well as in the previous terms. But Congressman Jose de Venecia was elected Speaker yet we have not seen such comprehensive legislative agenda," he said.

"On his first day, Congressman Jose de Venecia should be asked and has been asked to have performed in a very unsatisfactory manner," he added.

Villafuerte also said that De Venecia had kept congressmen "in the dark" on the specific allocations of the budget.

He said there was consensus among lawmakers to open the "books of accounts," but no action was undertaken.

The raised suspicion that "there are many thousand transactions concerning the budget of the House that Rep. Jose de Venecia as Speaker removed into that are deliberately being hidden" from the lawmakers, he said.

Leah vs Mrs. Defensor: Heat of probe spills out of Senate hall

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

TENSION SPILLED out of the Senate hearing room on Monday. There was finger-pointing and screaming at the steps of the Senate lobby when Julie Defensor, the wife of Presidential Chief of Staff Michael "Mike" Defensor, confronted singer-turned-activist Leah Navarro, spokesperson of the Black and White movement.

"I was halfway through my cigarette, and all of a sudden this lady comes to me and reminded her sister [Mrs. Defensor]. I was trying to ignore her, but every screaming at me. She says, how dare you involve my children...," Leah said in a radio interview yesterday.

Julie admitted that she pointed a finger at Leah but she insisted that she never shouted at her. She said she considered her only because the anti-Arroyo activist dragged the children into the controversy. Loudly. "I wonder what they are watching on TV. Children? Pilo'ng nagtatanda [Pilo is surrounded by liars]."

Leah admitted she made the statement but claimed she was not ashamed by the Defensors.

The two confrontations occurred at the Senate on Monday as around the hearing on the Mirandum Broadband Network bribery scandal, where Defensor's husband and other officials refuted statements made by Rodolfo Lozada Jr. that police and government officials conspired to keep him from telling the truth.

"I suffered all the harsh words and insinuations for 24 hours when Mike appeared in the first one but I did not react because I knew this was all part of being a politician's wife. What I can't tolerate is when my children are dragged into this. Like any mother, I felt bad about her remarks," said Julie in an interview.

On her way down to the Senate lobby, Julie said she heard Leah make the statement.

"[The Leah Navarro] looked me in the eyes and I knew she meant it for me. That's why I decided to confront her. I told her she was unfair and still righteous.

"She told me she was standing by her statements. I told her that I was clean [with Lozada] and she wasn't, so how could she claim to know the truth," said Julie, who was talking in several radio interviews on the incident.

Julie claimed that Leah and her companions were heckling her frustrated the whole time. "I really feel bad about Lozada for putting me in the crossfire of Mike. He was close to a friend and he [Lozada] is saying all these different things about Mike in the hearing."

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Conspiracy

EDITORIAL

IT TOOK SOME TIME FOR SEN. JOKER ARROYO TO come to terms with what was unfolding before his—and the nation's—eyes. "What you're telling us," he boomed at Rodolfo Noel Lozada Jr., "is that all these government officials are in conspiracy with you?" As if such a possibility boggled the mind. But this is precisely what we only Lozada, but all the administration officials and their battery of lawyers on display in the Senate were indeed saying and continued to say. There was a conspiracy.

The conspiracy was upon the instigation of Lozada, who deeply desired avoiding the Senate inquiry. The objective of the conspiracy was to prevent Lozada from testifying. The conspiracy involved, by their own admission, Environment Secretary Avelino Atienza, and Deputy Executive Secretary Manuel Gaite. The conspiracy involved the Philippine National Police's highest echelons, and those of the Bilateral Agusan International Airport. What the administration disputes is that the conspiracy involved kidnapping Lozada, and that President Macapagal-Arroyo knew what was afoot.

As for everything else, officials high and low were willing to fall on their swords. Grim admitted that legally they had no leg to stand on in terms of frustrating the Senate's power to summon Lozada and compel his testimony, but the legal sages of the government used their brain power to try to soften the Senate. Atienza admitted that he had committed to the gun-for-of-speeding Lozada abroad, and trying to trundle him back into the country. Michael Defensor admitted that he'd tried to institute damage control in the media by suggesting that Lozada call a press conference but scratch the party line. PNP Director General Avelino Razon, Bicol General Manager Alfonso Cua, his deputy—Jaramillo and Senior Supt. Rod Marcellana all said they'd tried to snatch Lozada out of the Nina and "rescue" him (and the Defensor-organized press conference could take place.

Marcellana rolling around in a Tiburon (a high-priced SUV) loaned by a "friend" is just one example of an official who has blurred the lines between what is private and what is public, where everything is permissible because of access to power and where money easily changes hands, whether it be Defensor's handing P50,000 he just happened to have on hand, or the billions in government commissions.

But even the watchful gaze of Ronaldo Mercado, the President's lawyer, and the periodic consultations among all the President's men, could not achieve the administration's very limited objectives. The only things that remain in doubt is whether Lozada's abduction was a well-planned one, or one that was bungled from the start because it was triggered by official panic, and to that extent the President was in the know, although it's quite obvious the whole scheme was hatched with her political and legal protection in mind.

Senator Arroyo and Jose Miguel Arroyo stepped up to try to realize the bearing in the direction of pinning the blame on the administration's smackdown, Atienza and Mercado-Ina, for having turned "securing" Lozada into a public relations nightmare the administration didn't deserve, because it was only trying to help keep Lozada from incriminating high officials.

What is indispensable is that for the Palace, the media must only to be manipulated. Furthermore, the administration continues to make it clear that allies are only useful to the extent that they can be sequestered to be dissensible in public, or be sacrificed to keep the public off the President's scent. Lawyer Antonio Bautista, for example, kept trying to focus attention on former Commission Benjamin Abalos as the real culprit in the whole ZTE deal, the appropriation bill go.

Also very clear is that the administration intends to quash the other branches of government in patently boorish and subversive. Law and regulations are all subject to arbitrary tactics. The chain of command, uniformed officers and armed accomplices are expected to obey orders even if such orders are vague and lend such indications to snatch around, waiting for further intentions. All are tools meant to be be used for partisan objectives.

For there can be no more partisan objective than to shield the executive from congressional oversight, to divert public outrage to the excuse where cases run where and die, and to excuse the President of any culpability for her actions.

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All the President's men

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THEN ? SOUNT LIKE THIS, BUT THE HIGHEST ranking television show now is the AVC broadcasts of the Senate hearings on the ZTE-NBN scandal. People leave their work, forget to eat their lunches and stay up until the wee hours of the morning to watch the show. Even those who are not entertaining and important ladies from the soap operas and favorite news anchors like "Joe Bataan" or "Wowowee" can even give our favorite talk show hosts in the media, in the markets, in airports and buses, even in churches: people are talking about Jun Lozada and the ZTE. Thanks to AVC, the public seems to be well informed about it. ABC belongs to the ABS-CBN network.

As the whole world must now unfold, it looks like before a reporting itself, Sen. Allan Peter Cayetano, chair of the blue ribbon committee, said in last Monday's hearing, the "abduction" or "kidnapping" (take your pick) of Lozada which he was to testify from investigation from the take-over affair he invited, reminded him of a similar incident at the airport years ago when Ninoy Aquino was taken from his plane by government men, taken down the stairs to the tarmac and shot. It also reminded me of Watergate when President Richard Nixon used all his resources to save him in the coverup of a burglary the same thing President Macapagal-Arroyo is doing now to save herself from the scandal. Nixon failed and in the both incidents finally ended with both presidents, Nixon and Hilton, being toppled. Hilton was chased out of the country by people power and Nixon was forced to resign after he was impeached by the House.

The similarities are numerous. The mysterious of Ninoy ordered by somebody who just visited at his release to the Philippines from the United States, was the last straw to the people long abused by Marcos' martial law. They aroused at Edsa in that fitness moment in the country's history and forced Marcos to flee.

Today, the abduction of Lozada on orders of somebody who panicked at his return from Hong Kong has aroused the people to anger over the Arroyo administration, which has long abused the people in a de facto martial law.

Vindication

THERE'S THE RUB

Gerardo de Quiros

IT HAS ITS HUMOROUS MOMENTS, THOUGH of the kind that made its debut the opposite. One of them came during Bryson Aquino's interrogation of Paul Manzanillo, deputy chief of the PNP Special Protection Office and head of the group that "rescued" Jun Lozada. Aquino, not inspired, said in the course of his questioning brought out the following facts about the operation.

One, Manzanillo had absolutely no idea about the nature of the threat to Lozada. He did not know who Lozada was, he did not know how big or small the threat to him was, he did not know the identity of the persons who made the threat. The first he magnified as the voice: "It could come from the administration, it could come from the RSB, anyone." So how did he design his response to the threat? "I made a judgment call."

Two, Manzanillo had absolutely no idea who "Boga" or Bob Ali Mitra are was. Whether was not threat to him personally because he could identify Lozada on his handset. But who knew National PNP Director General Avelino Razon and other men are. Roger Salonga, on the senior list of the PNP, who was brought on a flight to St. Makes on "assigned" with airport security. So what did Manzanillo do with someone he knew he knew? He assigned him to be Lozada's main "security," sitting him at the head car with him. So while he trailed behind in another car.

Three, Manzanillo had absolutely no idea where they were going. He had no idea how long to take to reach, he had no idea how long to stop him, he had no idea what to do with him. So to secure him, he took him from the secure confines of his subject and to see him several others they would be ambushed anywhere while he secured the area to see what to do next.

My assessment ended there. For I modified something I have said while I was writing a book on martial law many years ago from one of those who abducted Tommy Manotoc during Marcos' time. This military officers told they take their Manotoc out only while waiting for their superiors to arrive. So it turned out that superiors were just debating whether to dump him or produce him alive.

In all the time they were debating around, Manotoc's life lay in the balance. Fortunately for him, his abductors' superiors decided that he be "produced" with a live storyline that Manotoc rescued him as an encounter with the NPA.

I had thought that if anyone would be able to appreciate Lozada's ordeal, it would be fellow heroes. I had thought that he had appeared at the Senate finally because he was on "safe" ground, because he could rely on fellow heroes on a matter involving human rights. Even down on a few military and police officials and regrets but moved ground without compromising Malacañang. Alas, not even that. He couldn't even wrap his head around the dominance and took offense over a point he himself opened. Ah, but the plot thickens and gets more complicated.

But if you had a modicum of imagination, you could appreciate what Lozada went through to date, you would be for better. In his declaration—and they were legion, no matter many came to dismantle him, alas five times in a row—he had to refute that he was kidnapped or abducted. And Lozada himself, who reportedly said he was not a lawyer and did not understand the legal implications of those terms, would be worried to just about the whole he went through and have others to label it. But according to the proceedings on TV (you can also help but be my eye "kidnapped? abducted? Those words are too 'pale to catch the terror you put the man through."

Lozada would just say simply: "I was out in armed throughout this time," and would say little if anything more than that. "But you're not a plus. They took me against my will. I kept telling them I just wanted to go home, but they

(continued on page 13)

drove me around. They told me to stop texting and to shut my cell phone. I could not get in touch with my wife and family. They would not let me leave the car. I was in the basement they wanted me to sit in the inside the car, not inside Sin's hotel. Finally, they brought me to a lawyer I did not know." And he would conclude: "If that is a kidnapping, then I don't know what has different to it."

The rest of this country would conclude: If that isn't kidnapping, then we don't know what kidnapping is. Hitmen, Alabang, Glade, Bonifacio, Suarez, Defensor—you have much to answer for. And on a day when the British have their keepers and protectors prove gone, you will.

If Jun Lozada's straightly first was the day for him. He was brilliant in his simplicity. He was touching in his simplicity. He was believable in his simplicity. All the long-drawn out affairs of his life were summed up in: "I was out in armed throughout this time." But to the end they just broke themselves like Humpty Dumpty and could not put themselves back again. They kept harping on a point that they thought would thoroughly damage Lozada's credentials, which was that it was he who did not want to appear in the Senate and therefore the blame for his life came from—other than government. To which Lozada readily agreed. He really did not want to appear in the Senate, but only because, as he had told hitmen, Defensor, et al., if he did, he would be compelled to tell the truth. And therefore the threat to his life could only come from government.

He would be unshakeable in that contention. He would be unshakeable in that contention. And all the efforts to rattle him, to confuse him, to confound him and only to his detriment being confused, confounded and contemplated. All of which only served to underline the unchanged person has always known her whom seems to have been lost on this country's lawyers: There is only one weapon you can wield to light off the urge the senator of the night will lay upon you when you take the witness stand, that will leave you trembling when the smoke clears, proud and victorious.

The truth.

SOS: Calling Cardinal Sin

CARDINAL SIN, WHERE ARE THOU?

Desperation, woe and again, is expressed as the Catholic bishop's several groups who want them to retire and the strongly against President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. They have been deeply disappointed that there is no Jaime Cardinal Sin among the bishops today to lead a "people power" intervention to boot her out.

Everywhere, it is afraid, is badly misplaced. We actually have had no lack of would-be Cardinal Sins in the past few years since the "Hello, Garci" tapes started the political pot boiling over exactly "there have been at least four or five such bishops, one in fact capitally called for the people to join a rebellious in one of those strange local papers, others supported impeachment moves in Congress, and still others contributed their names to statements and statements calling for the President to step down. But that's as far as it happened. And amazingly, nobody is taking note.

Most simply, the reason is that the people did not respond. Period. Hardly anyone took to the streets in answer to their calls. And I don't think the reason was that those bishops were not candidate Sins.

It does look as our experience of people power in the past—and the last approaching 22nd anniversary of Edsa I is an appropriate time to do so—hangs out this little fact: On the surface it was the people who were the ones who responded to Edsa I. Likewise for Edsa II. I suspect for Edsa II, I would say to be helped... and helped tremendously. But for wasn't the real decision maker for their servicemen. The people were—what which support what I point out was to an earlier column that the real hang makers for an endorsed are not the bishops but the people.

Then, in the first Edsa, the coup elements that preceded it made clear what the people wanted.

COMMENTARY

Francisco V. Claver, S.J.
John J. Carroll Institute on Church and Social Issues

The bishops supported their will and Cardinal Sin helped to be the head of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines. In Edsa II, it was the rosary students gathered at the Edsa Shrine who united for his support, and he gave it. In both instances, it was clear where the people stood. In 1986 they want the change in a real democracies. And in 2001, they want with their feet. Only after they clearly expressed their will did the cardinal come in. If people power succeeded both times, it was because the people wanted it so.

All this is to point out that the exasperation of those who are worked up unduly about the bishops' failure to summon the kind of leadership being urged on them for another people power overthrow of a sitting President should be directed at the men responding people. And they should be asking seriously: Where are they? And why don't they come out to answer their calls?

Indeed, where are they? They are out there, watching, waiting, going about the best business of daily living. And thinking. Their concerns are not those of would-be revolutionaries. The issues are supposedly and are not—their reading of the national situation is their last pastoral statements.

Communiques on that statement zeroed in precisely on what they saw to be the bishops' leading reading of the differences between Mrs. Arroyo's presidency and the promises' regarding the various political problems of the nation. Not much was said about the statement's more substantive conclusion that those problems, though alarmingly perceived, had one common cause: the misperception of the good of the people so that of the few. Which is what ultimately, the bishops said, is our knowing sin is corruption.

And they asked that this Lenten season we do something serious about it. They asked for a very simple thing: that in every hotel of the Church we have "circles of discernment," reflecting and praying groups of the faithful coming together to see how we can be ourselves as a church of self-examination, not just of ourselves as individuals but as whole communities.

It hasn't occurred to anyone of our communities yet, it seems. But those discerning groups, if they take place in sufficient numbers all over the country, may well in effect be a massive push-up regarding our unyielding culture of corruption and a veritable referendum on our persons in spite of political and the mass support of President. What happens after that have unprecedented consequences?

It strikes me that one of the worst things about our national practice of corruption is that hardly anybody ever admits culpability and says "mea culpa" as Bishop Lazaro did in his Sunday sermon. Yet mea culpa, "Mea culpa" is the first step to the call to action that the bishops are asking of all of us. There is a great need for more examples. That is why the bishops' statement that they didn't do anything but are pushing he should be done only by Bishop-talking, Congress, provincial, municipal and barangay governments.

It spreads quiet? It does probably is, but it shows how desperate things are and how there is all the more need for all of us to work our own hops on, as the bishops insistently ask, together, everyone doing his/her own little share.

That's what people power is all about.

Is this any way to treat a partner?

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

IT'S CERTAINLY ironic that at a time when the nation's attention is riveted to Senate hearings on billions gone to bailouts and the "unimaginable" greed of officials, the national government is going after the tax breaks enjoyed by private corporations who donate to charitable causes and organizations.

These causes and projects are carried out by the NGO community—countless foundations, agencies, organizations and groups—which supplement or sometimes even take the place of efforts by the government to provide basic services and alleviate hunger and poverty.

In this sense the NGO community is indeed a partner of government, stepping in where government failures, or where it ignores or overlooks certain segments of the population. It is helpful and complementary, the shoulder, some children or so on these. Often, successful projects or approaches tried out by NGOs are a "pilot" basis before the government for government policies and projects of a wider scope and greater application.

It is therefore quite unfortunate officials would want to help these NGOs as much as possible, instead of viewing them as undeserving recipients of the generosity of others. But that's one message pending senate chief Prudencio Macapagal Arroyo signed EO 671, in effect, withdrawing previous executive endorsement to the accrediting or vetting of NGOs that would enjoy "donee institution" status.

* * *

BY WAY of background, the accreditation process has been lengthy, for the past few years, with the Philippine Council for NGO Certification, a private, self-regulated body composed of the NGO community, the PCNC conducts screenings on the principles, policies, operations and accounts of NGOs seeking accreditation, after which it would recommend to the BIR the issuance of the license and the Bureau of Internal Revenue decides if the grant is given. A representative of the BIR also sits on the board of the PCNC.

The idea was to assist the BIR and other government bodies in evaluating applicant NGOs, while ensuring some degree of self-regulation and monitor within the community. I would surmise

that perhaps part of the motivation for the creation of the PCNC was also to ensure no bad or problem accreditation process, as well as shield the NGO community from politics or influence peddling.

But late last year, EO 671 was drafted and eventually signed, apparently on the basis that the functions carried out by the PCNC amounted to "undue delegation of power."

The first time the PCNC, which had come to view itself as a "partner" of government, heard about EO 671 was when publishers had already been issued. In a statement, the council denied that it was carrying undue power, clarifying that it "merely assists the BIR in evaluating applicant NGOs through a screening process."

The statement adds that "PCNC has operated for nine years, without any financial cost to the government. It is a unique organization in the sense that it is the only private sector group that is jointly managed by stakeholders of the NGO community, the PCNC conducts screenings on the principles, policies, operations and accounts of NGOs seeking accreditation, after which it would recommend to the BIR the issuance of the license and the Bureau of Internal Revenue decides if the grant is given. A representative of the BIR also sits on the board of the PCNC.

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* * *

MEETWHILE, along surveying the NGO community is that, under EO 671, responsibility for accrediting "donee institutions" falls on different agencies, depending on the nature of the applicant NGOs: the DSWD for charitable, religious or social assistance groups, the DOST for research institutions, the PDEA for sports promotion, the NCCA for arts and culture, and the DepEd for educational institutions. This promises a bureaucratic nightmare, as

some of these fields overlap and government agencies are notorious for their slowness in processing and a keen understanding of the NGO community, culture and spirit, especially with regard to NGOs that address multiple, cross-cutting issues.

In a letter to the President, the PDEC asked for the repeal of EO 671, or failing that, its revision or amendment. Government insists, it said, are simply processed in the presence of allied agencies' units in the PDEC board, who is designated to "guarantee that all provisions of the DOJ between BIR and PDEC, and those of Revenue Regulations 13-98 are fully complied." It also argued that they have developed an effective coordination, evaluation and monitoring system that demonstrate, and that in fact PDEC presents the structures of government services and functions exist to government."

* * *

BUT IN nine years of operation, the PCNC has received over 1,500 applications for certification and accredited 839 applicants. The accredited NGOs now accountable PCNCs membership, which covers the membership of 1,000 NGOs and relies on the strength direction of the council. In its letter to the President, the council pointed out that it has "a large constituency which is self-governing and composed of different types of non-stock, non-profit organizations, corporations, individuals, charitable, educational, scientific, artistic, cultural, rehabilitation of victims, social welfare, education and health."

It added that "the examination and evaluation process of the qualifications of applicant NGOs requires skills and manpower. PCNC has dedicated staff and volunteers, who are all volunteers performing rigorous interviews, documentation, field visits and follow-up to ensure that the four major criteria prescribed in the Regulations are properly met."

But the government is simply take charge of the examination/evaluation process would mean hiring of evaluators by various concerned government agencies just for this purpose," it pointed out, "a bit unwise that this will be an added burden to the government with the additional costs of salaries, per diems, allowances, miscellaneous, etc. in the national budget."

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The Church

A FEW YEARS BACK, WHEN PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo first faced allegations of serious corruption, people... the Protestant herself and her supporters, the opposition, the ordinary—looked with hoped toward the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) to speak out. When the bishops finally spoke out, it was to urge the people to

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

be calm and to wait. Then with a media frenzy on such abominable discussions about the same issues.

That time around, in the wake of Rodolfo Lozada's former conviction, the CBCP has issued a stronger statement, "Roberto Yesterday and Rolledo In the Gospel," acknowledging that "our country has (for) too long been receptive to the corruption of people in government." There was also a cryptic but strong call: "The best challenge is now to commend action."

We, translate as that latest statement have been, in our the least, amazed. True, the statement made front-page headlines but the reactions, in favor or opposed, have been minimal. Opposition politicians have been largely silent. It was Senator Aquino Jr. who issued a somewhat more expressing support for the bishops but saying the call for continued action was "premature."

By and large, people are shrugging their shoulders and going their own way. The relativist silence is intriguing, and is worth analyzing.

Symbolic capital

Both local and foreign media observers to cite influence of the Church in the Philippines. "The Church"—I'm already too casual about the title but because it would be redundant to say the Catholic Church in the Philippines, especially since its language, "kalis, kalisi" [I pray, you pray] the Protestants churches, the Iglesia ni Cristo (which is not, incidentally, considered Protestant), and the Muslims.

Yet, I can understand why people use the term. Catholicism is the religion of the majority in the Philippines and the Catholic Church has "ruled" the country in various ways through its 400-years in the Philippines. The almost of the years during the Spanish colonial period contributed to many small revolts, and was one main reason for the Philippine Revolution of 1898.

When the Americans took over, the Catholic Church had to go into the defensive. With a separation of Church and State, and facing a largely Protestant American colonial power, the Catholic bishops [sometimes with the help of their American counterparts] would occasionally speak out when they felt threats to their privileges and their institutions.

In more recent history we've seen Edsa I, which support Marcos, and Edsa II, which ousted Estrada. In both cases, the role of the late Jaime Cardinal Sin and other bishops was significant in mobilizing people.

To understand the role of the Church" in the Philippines, it's important we begin now to recognize that it is not one monolithic body. We have the hierarchy, represented by the CBCP, but even among the bishops, there can be very diverse views on social and political issues. Then there are the lower and the religious, again with no just diverse but sometimes conflicting views on the "proper" role of the women and men brought together loosely by baptism, with varying degrees of religious practice and even more diverse views about society.

The Catholic Church derives because of what social scientists call "symbolic capital." We all know the importance of economic capital, which the Catholic Church does have, in large amounts. But there's also symbolic capital, which is based on non-material resources or attributes. For local Catholic Church, this comes from an about vaguely defined concept of "holiness," of representing God.

I consider Cardinal Sin a prime example of this symbolic capital. The millions and loyal gains would be less willing to vote here when/not having a man or woman "of the cloth." That last term is important in showing the power of symbolic capital: the religious tend to wear their habits or robes even to capture their symbolic capital—and to protect Lozada.

But while the Catholic religious' symbolic capital remains powerful, it does not necessarily translate to follow what they preach. People have their own minds, their own awareness of right and wrong, and they are capable of making such "holy" affairs proof affairs of the next world.

During the Marcos dictatorship, there was a term "activist" Catholic Church involved in social action, down to the grassroots levels, helping farmers unite their land tenancy problems, workers with their labor grievances, fishermen with their fishing rights, and indigenous peoples with their ancestral domain claims. Then there was the "charismatic" movement spiritual capital. (As still brought one the "Salvation," not necessarily in the religious sense, but people with faith in justice and the possibilities of change.

Times have changed. Pope John Paul II opposed "liberation theology" and the "activist" Church, and with the advent of neo-Catholic involvement. We know how he did use appointees of Cardinal Sin's role in Edsa II. The present Pope is even more conservative and clearly affects the way the CBCP views today.

No doubt, the bishops and religious will speak out on social issues, for instance, in behalf of fair families farmers for example. And the Gospels for Christ's Lawsuit feelings tells us Christ's concern for the most vulnerable, but the Catholic Church's concern on social action spends pales in comparison with what they did in the 1970s and 1980s. Instead, we have bishops who are more concerned about spending outspoken family planning than about social justice.

There in power have learned, too, how easy it is to play with the Catholic Church's symbolic capital. All they need to do is to have the aura of "holiness," espousing agreements with the bishops in their opposition to family planning, divorce, gay rights, etc. Then they can do what they want or think social justice is fudge, see, if the politicians occasionally engage in public pro-life matters of piety even shot or eyes-closed prayers. Not surprisingly Bunye did express agreement with the CBCP concerning "contractual action" to counter "widespread graft, coal scandal and other controversies and issues."

In the public's muted response a sign of weariness, not just of political rhetoric but of personal levels? The church-as-will remains packed, but I am certain the prayers are not as much for deliverance from government scandals as from divine intervention for a job overseas.

Comments are welcome at mtan@philstar.com.ph

A haven for Filipinos

TO BE IN HONG KONG BEFORE THE CHINESE New Year is quite a class. There is a festive air about town, and all the more so outside.

The year is now almost over with temperatures dipping to 8 degrees Celsius. Weather forecasters said that was the coldest winter Hong Kong has experienced in the past half century. As always, I went to all my favorite places to eat. Yung Kee for roast goose, Lin Heung Tea House for dim sum, Mrong Garden for luncheon dimsum, Spring Deer for Peking duck, Maxim Restaurant for roast pigeon and Macanese food first, and some place that serves bacalao (cod) three different ways.

Some friends wanted me to meet with me for dinner the last night, and I was driven down to the Wan Chai at the Big and the wonderful outfits' chicken they feasted on in the Year of the Rooster. But since this is the Year of the Ox, they decided to go vegetarian during the Chinese new year.

Hong Kong is a haven for Filipinos, but until I could find, comparing them with the famous Lord Jesus's because it is rumored that Lord and lady have had a parking of years and lady have and her recipe is the Hong Kong franchise holder of Kentucky Fried Chicken. Another reason is how easy it is to get around in HK. In my opinion the best way to avoid the city-ing into predictable, and much to my liking, were to chose served as Macau Restaurant on Sam Tai Tsai where you can actually order a pork chop sandwich (imagine a real pork chop) and a cup of coffee.

Filipinos want to Hong Kong for different reasons. For many it is a place to work, for others it is a place to escape to since Christmas, and for me it is a place to eat, a place to roam around making the acquaintance of our heroes in Hong Kong, and to be refreshed in the gap about the two cities where we think respect that were marked by the Hong Kong Immigration Board during the year of Jaime Alfaro Secretary Enrich Ho, an admirer of Rizal, and an unfortunate officer who maintained a clinic on the

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

street where Rizal also resided on occasion. A modern bar also lived installed in a playground that was the site where Andres Iguacido and some friends made the first Philippine flag. Those wandering Philippine colors [1898] were the first ephemeral refugee for Filipinos during the Philippine Revolution. More importantly, they educate Hong Kong residents on our characteristics.

Jose Burgos was once their chief and made his real estate from our reminder in Hong Kong has to collect the more historical markers with the Inquirer office.

"I am a history buff. Even as a kid, I have always been fascinated by museums, old books and antique pieces. In fact, I keep a 1644 Spanish Philippines Bible in my study," he writes. I gather his interests and assets of the historical genre. My guilt and curiosity issues me by asking why I have a strong affinity to things but are "unbelievable" or "un-human." Nonetheless, the agreed to meet me in Mercure near my condo unit in Ortigas, Pasig. [My condo unit, by the way, may be every unrealistic place. But I do not think it is good thing and so get married and start a new life in a new town should.]

I would like the second kind of myself to experience. If, I promise myself, I will write to Hong Kong to get the delicious Del Monte tinned bananas that are ubiquitous in Hong Kong for the sake of comforting the homesick or gross Philippine exports, dont maybe I am a patriot. Currently I am working for cyber-theoretical company in the New Territories

of Hong Kong. I have observed that the presence of a horde of Filipino fans in a park will irritate only Chinese locals. Last week as I was going out of my flat for work, I noticed a mountain sized plastic bin for dog excrement near the lobby lion. Instead of the intended size, "Please clean up after your dog" and under that was "In cases requiring an," "virtually I felt proud even Tagalog version. Then I noticed that it was translated by non-Filipinos. "Alive" Tagalog is going places nowadays. On second thought, I realized that maybe they inhaled Tagalog because they suspect Filipino domestic helpers talked to dogs and/or their employers' dogs are responsible for the unintelligible.

"Pan and a movie break with your articles on mysteries made me ponder about the role of Hong Kong in Philippine history. I bet that years ago, our relationship with HK was more than just exporting domestic helpers and importing tinned tuna, both young and mature, color their domestic helpers, right? HK must be one of the ports of choice for ancient Chinese merchants sailing to Las Manc/Philippine for trade right?

"I know you're a few significant historical facts, stories or leads for these Filipino heroes during Spanish rule. Among them were Jose Rizal, Felipe Agoncillo and Galicano Apacible. Rizal used to have a clinic in Dapitan Street, Apacible's home, Marcela Agoncillo and the Philippine flag was sewn in Hong Kong. Haven't I been studied in Hong Kong before before taking classes. What else should an interested Filipino doing in HK know?

"I hope more of our countrymen will read your articles and get more curious about the past by researching light for a future more like. I want to see the day when Filipinos would only need to study after their own dogs instead of any foreign master's."

Comments are welcome at ocampo@philstar.com.ph

God creates by evolution

LETTERS

"YOU CANNOT SERVE TWO MASTERS, FOR ... [illegible] ... love and another ... hate and ... or ... cultivate God, ... we tend to require ... grand instantaneous acts.

... [illegible] ... believe that our universe was hurriedly formed in seven earth days by the One who had everyday at hand? Or that the first human was born at adult? If you are to have an offspring, say your first child, would you like him or her to be born as instant grown-up man or woman instead of a baby? Would God have wanted his creation, His child to have been born on instant porous age? Imagine, if we as parents would have to sow fear and watch our children grow and develop through the years and months, how much more would God love to care for and watch His creation gradually unfold, grow and ... evolve!

Sometimes, it's obvious that events lead by closing people's hearts and minds to the receiving of salvation. Meanwhile, like some pole-vaulters, many of our religious leaders repeatedly the prominent one's cross raise while most of the flocks are passive. Isn't this tendency opposite reflection of God?

But hold on to your faith, we can change. God assures us to evolve.

—ERNEL LAPUZ,
2329 Ipamilla,
San Isidro Bukid, Manila

Bishop's final say on meeting with GMA

... [illegible] ... to THE INQUIRER FOR PUBLISHing in totality response to the news report that was published about me in its Jan. 28 issue.

Before God and in conscience, I wish to tell the laypeople that unless interviewed, all that was asked of me was the meeting with the Cabinet members that took place Jan. 23, 2008. I was never asked about the Jan. 8, 2008 meeting with President Macapagal-Arroyo because if I were asked, there was no need for me to clear and I would have gladly said yes because, I repeat, nowhere there is on the President to keep the INQUIRER from its quiet meet for private. So the sake of truth, I report, I was never specifically asked much less repeatedly asked about the Jan. 8, 2008 meeting. There was no reason for me to keep that meeting as the President previously posted our request.

I wish to forgive whatever misunderstanding was caused by the reporter who interviewed me—in "ambush," as we want them to the meeting with the legislators about important bills on Family and Life.

With all my blessings and prayers, I am devotedly in Christ.

—MONSIGNOR A. TALAVERA, D.D.,
Archbishop of Lingayen

2007 Filipino of the Year congratulated

... [illegible] ... to PARMAWIA GOZ "MANNY" ... Pacquiao for having been chosen as the Inquirer's 2007 Filipino of the Year for 2007.

Indeed, Gov. "Manny" Ed Pacquiao deserves to be Inquirer's 2007's Filipino of the year for his "inspiring electoral victory, his compelling political story and his united vision and resolve ... [illegible] ... [illegible] ... [illegible]

Cha-cha road show begins today in Cebu City

From page A1

tenure in power beyond the end of her term in 2010 whether as president or prime minister under a parliamentary setup.

"This could be harmful," said one Arroyo confidante who did not want to be identified because he feared conflagration by the President.

The new push for Charter change (Cha-cha) comes amid the testimony of Rodolfo Noel Lozada Jr. on allegedly unauthorized calls involving high-level government officials and individuals close to the President, that dogged the $\$$981-contract bagged by Chinese firm ZTE Corp.

But some of Mrs Arroyo's closest advisers have strong reservations about the wisdom of the new push. Charter change, they say, could further agitate the people into joining a call for the Arroyo to step down.

In Legazpi City and Davao City, the PIA hosted forums on the shift to federalism attended by local government officials, businessmen, members of the academe and reservists purportedly to obtain views on the new campaign.

Too much resources, power

Salcedo, who is leading the campaign in the Bicol region, said at the forum that federalism was an idea whose time had come because "being an archipelago, the Philippines is already overly fragmented."

The system setup "centers many times too much resources on the national government and allows unelected Cabinet members to wield too much power, according to the Albay governor.

But Ateneo Bicol Center for Initiatives, a former political science professor at the Divine Word College in Legazpi, advised caution.

"All forms of governments look good on paper. The problem is with the people who run them and its implementation," Wimbassa said.

"No constitutional system can legislate individuals to change," he said.

Bigger share of income

The business sector in Legazpi, however, said federalism would have its benefits.

Geo Trampe Jr. of the Albay Chamber of Commerce and Industry and autonomous local government (ARMM) could mean less red tape and a bigger share of the national income for local governments.

Eduardo de Leon, PIA Bicol director, said the PIA would host forums on federalism nationwide.

In Davao City, advocates of federalism said they would lobby Congress for the shift to federalism. They added they felt confident of the new campaign because the Speaker, Prospero Nograles, is from Mindanao.

Elena Elbambuena, PIA director for the Davao Metropolitan, said the Liberal Political, Davao-based movement headed by Rey Magno Teves, held a media forum at the NCCC Mall in Davao City in the morning.

"They wanted to revive the campaign for federalism," El Bambuena said.

Single amendment for Muslims

Officials, led by prime talks adviser Jesus Dureza Jr., have dangled federalism to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) to entangle a deadlock in negotiations over territory.

But MILF leaders flatly rejected the offer, saying it was just a government ploy to undo the gains[.]

Dureza issued several statements seeking to assure critics that there was no hidden agenda in the federalism proposal that was being dangled to the MILF.

But the attempt to divide Cha-cha with MILF acceptance failed, forcing its proponents to simply bring the contentious issue to their presentation of federalism's entry to untangle the peace talks.

Words aren't necessary, the opinion more natural again to open another presentation—that of federalism as an urgent element of local government units, particularly governors who are dogged by local rebellion.

If plans don't necessary, proponents of the new push for federalism are supporting a groundswell of support from local government executives.

Task easier with new Speaker

The task would be easier, according to the proponents, with the new set of leaders in the House of Representatives under Nograles.

Attempts to amend the Constitution under then Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. did not prosper largely because of massive opposition and lingering doubts over the real motives.

Some Palace officials, who asked that they not be identified for lack of clearance to speak on the matter, said divisions among proponents of Cha-cha at the time of De Venecia also led to the movement's failure.

Clash over PM's age limit

One Palace official pointed to a clash between Joe Almonte and former President Fidel Ramos, it as a supporter of Charter change, over the age limit for prime minister under a parliamentary setup, then Cha-cha's main objective.

The source said Ramos had resorted to lower the age limit for prime minister to 45, which didn't sit well with De Venecia, who is just 65, because it would effectively frustrate his ambition to become prime minister.

Proponents of the new Cha-cha move said they saw no final answer from them this time because the visible objective would be just to shift to federalism.

Supreme Court ruling

By a vote of 8-7, the Supreme Court ruled on Oct. 25, 2006 against the "people's initiative" led by Sigaw ng Bayan and Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines to amend the Constitution to shift to a parliamentary form of government.

The tribunal said the initiative was null and void because it failed to comply with the constitutional requirement that the initiative must be directly proposed by the people and because proponents of the amendment also sought an overhaul of the Constitution.

More than a push

Critics of the new move among Mr Arroyo's circle of close allies, however, expressed fear that while the push for federalism could attract attention away from the sordid revelations of wiretaps Mr Lozada, it could also become a bigger source of threat to the Arroyo administration.

"We shouldn't be driving more nails into the coffin," said the source, refusing to elaborate.

The launch of the campaign in the turf of Mr Arroyo's former chief of staff and key adviser, however, sends a strong signal that the push for federalism is more than just a push.

"The plan is to show that there's a nationwide clamor for it," said an official deeply involved in the campaign, but who could not be identified for fear of being removed from his position. With reports from Jaime Garchitorena, Inquirer Southern Luzon, and Inquirer Mindanao

Talk of the town at the return of 'The Firm'

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LOOSE TALK AT THE FIRM The Senate witness Lozada is the focus at the reluctant party of the The Firm (CYC LAW), once the country's most powerful law office with the First Couple as its preeminent clients. It's really a welcome back reception for Attorney Cruz Jr., former defense secretary, and Simeon Marcelo, former Ombudsman, and five other Firm members who served the Arroyo administration. Seen at the fun gathering, from left, are Rudy Ateneo, lawyers Simeon Marcelo and Avelino Cruz and Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo. ALEX BADAYOS

nostrum in front of the host and neighbor of the generation."

The cocktails at the Sigaw Hall, team were in celebration the return of seven partners, including former Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr. and ex-Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo.

Guitar and voice flowed and a string quartet played "Speak Softly Love" from the movie "The Godfather."

Worst corruption

Lozada has stirred a political storm with his revelations about the supposed involvement of Mr Arroyo's husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, and former Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. in the $\$$329-million, scandal-ridden National Broadband Network deal with China's ZTE Corp.

Lozada had his first jolted television testimony with his story about how Abalos allegedly tried to prevent him from testifying at the Senate.

Minutes into his speech, in which he spoke of the need for change to improve the country's situation, Almonte again spoke of Lozada.

"Many I said this particular organ of our time[.] by saying that Jun Lozada, that the worst form of corruption is the corruption of the last," said the ex-adviser of former President Fidel Ramos.

Another people power

Mr Arroyo's spokesperson Ignacio Bunye cut a few feet away wanting for his turn to give a toast.

Almonte said Mr Arroyo needed to "lead by example."

He noted that the Philippines owed to a peaceful people uprising in 1986 to bring about her bid president.

"My suggestion is this: We have to organize another people power to make a good president," he said.

At one point in his speech, Almonte was passed a note reminding him to give his toast.

High-powered guests

Talking with reporters, Marcelo admitted watching Lozada's televised testimony and said the absence of big demonstrations was probably because people would rather put trust for Mr Arroyo to finish her term.

Other lawyers also spoke about Lozada in chats with the media. Some wondered how the people viewed Lozada's explosive testimony and whether state agents were really behind his abduction.

One state lawyer said that while he believed Lozada's allegations could lead to the convictions of high government officials, those people could also be easily pardoned.

For guests in the house, probe of the $\$$981-deal were also aimed, such as Senators Manuel Villar, Mar Roxas and Juan Ponce Enrile.

The guests also included former President Ramos, former Sen. Franklin Drilon, Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando and outsider Rommate Arroyo.

Firm's focus

Marcelo said The Firm, previously described as "powerful people in government, now now focusing on "strictly legal work."

"We don't get involved in politics. We don't accept work to government for sure," he said.

He noted that under the old scheme—where partners had been closely involved with government—The Firm's progress had been "slowed down" because their energies were focused elsewhere.

None of the partners gave speeches, but were smiles mixed presentations made to them by assembled guests—endorsing "more knowledge to tool in chairs.

Returning to its roots

"What Sonny Marcelo and I are doing now, with our experience in government, is that we're able to build good partnerships within the private sector and in government," Cruz said.

"From my experience, I see that tourism holds great promise for the country. It can create a lot of jobs. So with agriculture, so with mining, so with telecoms. And so with power and energy."

Another senior partner, Daniel Anguezo, confirmed The Firm was heading back to its roots.

Back to basics

"We've been quite involved in the political scene for the past couple of years so maybe now it's time to go back and consolidate," Anguezo said.

"It's back to basics. We'd like to concentrate on lawyering. We'd like to refocused our skills toward modern developments."

Policymakers from both sides of the aisle and members of the judiciary and the diplomatic corps were also present.

Is GMA involved? Lozada reply …

From page A1

him."

Asked if the President would be implicated, Lozada said: "I think so. At least according to Secretary Neri, he thinks it could really bring the house down," he said.

Instructions

He said Neri told him about the President's instructions the day after Neri was allegedly offered a Cabinet position and called the President about it.

Neri was reportedly called to Malacañang to order the letter to the Chinese government endorsing the ZTE project before Mr Arroyo flew to China on April 21, 2007, to witness the signing of the agreement.

In an interview with the bureau in mid-2006 7 on Saturday, Lozada, an electronics engineer and assigned CEO of state-owned environmental agency Philippine Forestry Corp., said Neri had told him several other people that subpoenaed him.

Asked what he thinks the President's role in the scandal was, Lozada was initially hesitant to talk. "This might be taken as a political statement already I guess she could have done more (by) moderating the group."

On Feb. 7 after he was freed by police, Lozada told reporters he had been tasked by Neri to "moderate the group" in the broadband deal, adding his troubles started when Abalos wanted to pocket his $\$$1.56 million commission from the project.

When asked if Mr Arroyo was part of the group, Bad's subsidiary answered with a smile.

Lozada was more hesitant to talk about the President's husband, saying Abalos was more in a position to talk about it.

"It's not for me to be around him. He's a good fellow, that's all I can say," Lozada said of the First Gentleman.

Lozada said he still regarded Neri highly and hoped that they had not parted ways.

"I'm sure he has his own reasons. (He's now running out), I don't want to speculate," he said.

More "Tatak PGH Plus" equipment and rehabilitation projects to be blessed

P100M PGH Rehabilitation Fund released by H.E. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo in June 2006 ; DFA Sec. Alberto Romulo turns over own projects

H.E., Gloria Macapagal Arroyo receives from DF President Emerlinda R. Roman, (F Manila Chancellor Ramon L. Arcadio and PGH Director Carmelo A. Alfiler a glass replica of the original PGH Building as a token of appreciation from the dF-PGH Community after the ceremonial presentation of projects on August 16, 2007 in Malacañang. On this day, President Arroyo also turned over to PGH another P100 M "centennial gift" for more equipment modernization and service facility improvement.

During her Labor Day speech in May 2006, Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal Arroyo pleasantly surprised the Philippine General Hospital (PGH) when she announced a P100M PGH Rehabilitation Fund as the initial assistance of the Office of the President to the hospital's centennial year celebration from August 17, 2006 to August 17, 2007. The fund was released on June 7, 2006 and was allocated as follows: P84 M for hospital equipment and P16 M for infrastructure renovation.

The Equipment Component

From the P84 M, PGH purchased two multislice-to CT Scans (x 2-slice and a 16-slice), one dual-head gamma camera, one 3D color Doppler ultrasound, one mobile health van fitted with multi-channel ECG machines, portable ultrasound, electrocautery machines, spirometer and emergency gadgets. PGH also procured assorted equipment/instruments for the Health Promotion Unit (Klinika ng Kalusugan) and Health Service for PGH and UP Manila employees.

The Rehabilitation Component

Sixteen million pesos (P 16 M) was dedicated to the rehabilitation of the 2,208 sq.m., 11-bed Right Central Block (RCB) 4th floor and half of the RCB 5th floor, making these prototype for PGH's seven (7) paybacks under the "Revalidation and Professionalization Project" of the current administration.

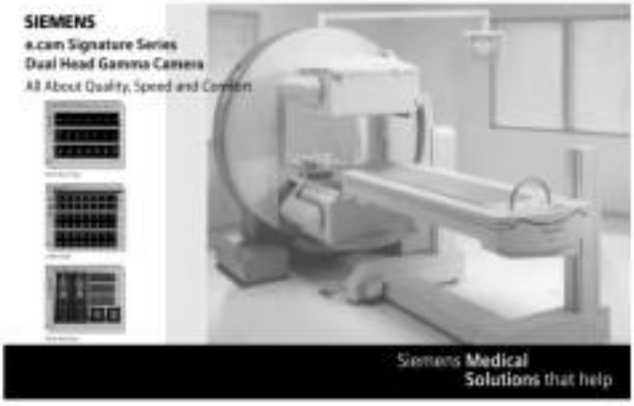
These projects are aimed at making state-of-the-art equipment more accessible to poor Filipinos and PGH trainees and teachers, and at modernizing service facilities in its national university hospitals elsewhere.

Sec. Alberto Romulo's Projects

Also on this day, Sec. Alberto R. Romulo will preside over the turnover ceremony of one (1) super plasma coagulator for the Organ Transplant Unit and one (1) 4-stop elevator for the Spine Unit.

Pay ward

Pay room



Mobile Health Van, fitted with various diagnostic / emergency equipment

Health Promotion Unit (Klinika ng Kalusugan) and instruments

3D ultrasound

Issues we need to raise
before Rodolfo Noel "Jun" Lozada is declared a "hero"

IN HIS TESTIMONY before the Senate, Rodolfo Noel "Jun" Lozada claimed he was assigned to "moderate the greed" in connection with the aborted ZTE contract, and also lambasted what he called "dysfunctional government procurement" system. But his testimony itself revealed he knows a lot about greed and that he is himself a practitioner of the dysfunctional procurement system that he talked about.

Other than his dramatic and theatrical early morning press conference where he surrounded himself with nuns and priests and his tearful allegations of being abducted at the airport upon his arrival from Hong Kong, there was nothing that Lozada said that could add to what have already been said during the yearlong investigations over the case.

If anything, Lozada only bared that he has no qualms about being contributor to the dysfunction of the government procurement system.

Consider the following:

1. He termed as "bubukol" the $130 million that Abalos allegedly tried to "protect" in connection with the deal. He said $65 million would be more acceptable, indicating that he would have recommended for the approval of the deal if the commissions were lowered to half. But what kind of morals would allow, in his own words, a "permissible zone" of corruption provided the amounts for bribes be reduced by half?

2. He admitted he was never an official consultant of Secretary Romulo Neri, and said he has never received compensation other than occasional lunches and dinners, yet he handled huge multi-billion peso projects, such as the NBN. In the process, he actually negotiated with top officials, high level business executives and high-powered project proponents, such as Abalos and De Venecia. For what? For his friendship with Neri? For love of country? Of course, he said he was there to "moderate the greed." Which means, he can actually accept greed and that he can deal with the greedy. In other words, a fixer. Fixers share in the commissions, even if these are "moderated" and "permissible."

3. He kept mouthing about the "dysfunctional procurement system," but when confronted by Senator Santiago about his irregular dealings as chief executive officer of the Philippine Forest Corporation (PFC), he sheepishly acknowledged that he indeed committed those irregularities – including the grant of contracts by PFC to himself, his wife and his brother.

4. Lozada lectured on the supposed ills of the bureaucracy during his testimony, including patronage and political influence over appointments, even if the officials appointed do not have any knowledge about the particular fields they are assigned in. Lozada is a communications engineer, yet he was assigned as CEO of the PFC, whose line is forestry, only because of his re-lationship with General Victor Corpuz and Neri.

5. Lozada mentioned about the Cyber Education project, an equally controversial project that was priced higher than the NBN project. What was his role in the project? Was he also able the "manage the greed" in the Cyber Education project?

6. On his so-called enlightening experience with the farmer and the guava during a trip in Negros, Lozada did not say if his "enlightenment" caused him to regret awarding 10,000 hectares of land to a single influential family in Negros, instead of the poor farmers whose plight he claims to be so concerned of. Perhaps the good senators can look into this?

7. Aided by Senator Chiz Escudero, Lozada said his questionable dealings as PFC head is only like "intramurals lang sa school" compared the alleged ZTE anomalies, which is like an NBA basketball game. By such twisted logic, it may be alright and within the "permissible zone" to take the life of a lowly vagrant, but it would be "forbidden zone" if the victim is a rich and powerful man, say, a senator.

Lozada only bared that he has no qualms about being contributor to the dysfunction of the government procurement system.

IS LOZADA a hero? He likened himself to a Jedi knight who has chosen the bright side. "May the force be with you," Senator Mar Roxas even saluted him. Using the Star Wars saga as a metaphorical take off, Darth Vader, the darkest of the dark knights, was once a Jedi knight who was consumed and corrupted, in the end, by greed, power and vengeance.

Lozada, by his own admission, was never at the bright side. He was a practitioner of dysfunction and an advocate of greed, albeit "permissible" by his own standards. He may also have been consumed by vengeance, because of the killing of his brother in 2001 during a botched police operation.

We call for a closure of the ZTE scandal by bringing the issue to court so that the guilty can be punished. Lozada should not also go unpunished for the irregularities he brazenly committed as government official.

Finally, we appeal to our people not to be swayed by this case so as to put our country again in jeopardy, as what the authors of this farce would want to.

KONGRESO NG MAMAMAYAN
Central Luzon-National Capital Region-Southern Tagalog Chapters

Across the NATION

100 villagers fleeing clashes descend on provincial capitol

DAVAO CITY—MORE THAN 100 FARMERS AND formal Lindgonon people) from the villages disrupted by stepped-up military operations in Davao Oriental on Tuesday descended on the streets of Mati City, the seat of the provincial government, to protest the ongoing military operations and demand the immediate pullout of government troopers.

The protesters came from the towns of Baganga, Cateel and Boston. Since early last month, government soldiers have been conducting a series of operations against the New People's Army in the areas.

In one operation, at least eight soldiers were killed when communist guerrillas ambushed their convoy in Barangay Kanipaan in Baganga.

The protesters assailed the military operations because these were causing the villagers hardships.

Ludivico Montero, a community leader from Boston, said the villagers were even being considered by the military as enemies and subjected to harassments and abuses.

Standing before members of the provincial board, Montero said: "Ayaw kasi nmagi nga mga sundalo (because of the military operations)."

At least 413 families from Baganga, Cateel and Boston have fled their villages for fear that they will be caught in the crossfire between government and NPA guerrillas.

The villagers are now demanding for the immediate pullout of government troopers, or a condition for them to return to their homes.

Following the heightened military operations in the area at the start of the year, the human rights group Karapatan has documented two cases of serial beatings and forcible evacuation, which directly affected 339 families in Barangays Kanipaan and San Mateo in Baganga.

In Cateel town, a Kampanya document said, 93 families were displaced due to the military operations of the 67th Infantry Battalion and 10th Special Forces in the area.

"Our lives have been gravely affected. The people are just living in fear. We can't work in our farms anymore and we are afraid for the safety of our children. We have pulled some of our things already so that in case the operations of the 67th IB worsen, we will flee to a safer place," said a resident of Boston.

The office of Gov. Corazon Malanyaon, however, countered the reports of people evacuating because of the fighting.

"Such report is false and misleading as not even a single evacuation center can be seen in the said municipalities precisely because there is no evacuation. Our local peace and order council knows," a statement from the governor's office said.

"What it is true that there was an encounter, the last fight took place in the hinterland parts of the village, particularly in the bar of the tribe which is not occupied by the civilians," Jeffrey M. Tupas, Mindanao Bureau

GOLD DRAGONS
The Chinese-Filipino community celebrated the Lunar New Year on Cebu Boul in Iloilo City with dragon dances, fireworks displays and food festivals.

Panlilio won't let poll case get in way of visit to remote village

PhilHealth Advisory

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Notice to Delinquent Employers and Self-Employed Members

It has been observed that a considerable number of employers and self-employed members have been remiss of their law-mandated duties to promptly and religiously pay their PhilHealth premium contributions.

This rampant indiscriminate practice has been taking its toll on the actuarial viability of the Corporation and consequently on its corporate mandate to provide better healthcare services and higher medical benefits to our members.

In line with the corporate objective of the National Health Insurance Program (NHIP) to provide all Filipinos with the mechanism to gain financial access to quality healthcare services, it is imperative that the consistent and regular remittance of the requisite premium contributions be assured to ensure constant coverage of all PhilHealth members during times of their medical needs.

To directly address these indiscriminate practices of delinquent employers and members, the PhilHealth shall now be filing the necessary civil and criminal actions under Article X, Section 44 of Republic Act 7875 against erring employers and members to recover premium arrearages beginning March 2008.

Employers and members with delinquent accounts are enjoined to update their unremitted premium accounts to avoid the imposition of the corresponding legal sanctions and penalties under Republic Act 7875 as amended or the National Health Insurance Act.

LORNA O. FAJARDO
Acting President and CEO

CAGAYAN, PAMPANGA—For the first time in 13 years, a governor has come to all the towns running 18 of Pampanga to listen to talk with residents and bring along the capitol's services.

"We're the only province who came and talked with as, heard our situation and personally delivered the government's service," Governor Mariwilles, 77, told reporters Friday in Pandi.

"Sure ma'm la kapatiran daman yang sa. Bale ma ako iuwi lang ahanin (You understand how we felt. We feel we're in heaven)," Mariwilles, former village chief, told Panlilio, a Catholic priest in town.

The governor told the old man and some 20 village officials and residents: "It's our obligation."

Panlilio repeated undertaken by the second list of 56 may provide relevant member Lilia Pineda, the candidate he defeated in the May 2007 elections, and addition by seven provincial board members on his governance style.

The dialogue with the Kapampangan villagers took place on Tuesday in a classroom at the Magsaysay Elementary School.

It is a midnight to the "Bumangon Ding Gobyerno Ay," a mobile services program meant to bring the government closer to the people.

This is the eighth place that the program has served since July.

Among the program's services were medical and dental missions, feeding activity, distribution of relief packages, veterinary services, job placement, cooperative and livelihood assistance, mobile library and storytelling, film viewing, bloodletting, training on tapping and basketmaking, legal advice and consultations.

Mariwilles, fond packs and vegetable seeds were distributed, costing on the average P250,000, according to provincial administrator Vivian Dizon.

Mariwilles said the last governor who spent time in the village in 1999 was Eddie Gloria, father of Vice Gov. Aurelio Gloria.

The mobile services program was a new thing to the village, he said. More than 1,000 men, women and children availed themselves of the services.

For the first time also, a government doctor checked on the health of 463 women who were among those raped by Japanese soldiers after their search and pillage of Mapaniqui on Nov. 23, 1944.

Almost all the village's men and boys were murdered by soldiers belonging to the 66th Group of the 14th Division Army under Japanese General Tomoyuki Yamashita, accounts said.

At least 120 of the 463 old women, who call their group Malaya Lola (Free Grandmothers), availed themselves of P10,000 checks by Dr. Antonio Ong. – Rosalyn Ocampo, Inquirer Central Luzon

Panlilio (at right) visiting Paulano Andrino and Gov. Eddie Panlilio. YOUNG/INQUIRER.NET/PAMPANGA.COM.PH

NEWSBRIEFS

■ DAVAO DEL SUR

Dirty water sends 52 people to hospitals

HEALTH officials here have issued a second alarm over the increasing number of people being affected with diarrhea.

Dr. Victoria Caparoso, municipal health officer, said as of Monday alone, 52 people, including children, were admitted to various hospitals and clinics here due to diarrhea.

Caparoso said health workers suspected that the disease was caused by contaminated water and they were now trying to find the source of the contamination. **Orlando Dinoy Inquirer Mindanao**

■ BUTUAN CITY

Gov lobbies for mining permit

AGUSAN del Norte Gov. Erlpe John Amante is pushing the approval of the last remaining permit for a large-scale mining project in the province.

Amante said he has written a letter to Environment Secretary Lito Atienza to ask him to approve the application of Philippine Mining Inc. (PMI) for an exploration permit.

PMI is a subsidiary of Philippine Mining Inc. (PMI) which is the majority stockholder of Amante's family. **Inquirer Mindanao**

■ ILOILO CITY

NSC exec named to Boracay group

MALACAÑANG has appointed an undersecretary of the National Security Council as head of the group supervising Boracay's development, which stirred its relocation to endure rules on the island's resort.

Deputy National Security Adviser Victor Ido has replaced Lina Kiay of the Boracay Eminent Persons Group (BPG), replacing Cornelio Padilla-effective Jan. 28.

Ido, a retired police general, was former Philippine National Police deputy chief for administration and a member of the Philippine Military Academy Class of 1977. **Nestor F. Burgos II Inquirer Visayas**

■ DAGUPAN CITY

Korean financing fulfills dream

THIS CITY's dream of having a fish processing plant is nearing reality after representatives of the Korean International Cooperation Agency (Koica) discussed with local officials the establishment of the facility at the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) here.

The Koica will provide $2.3 million for infrastructure assistance to the construction of the plant.

Nearby Bolinao, BFAR research center chief and interim executive director of the National Fisheries Research and Development Institute Nicanor Lopez said the proposed facility is a single-story plant for seafood processing, packing, freezing and smoking. **Yolanda Jones-Acosta Inquirer Northern Luzon**

■ CEBU CITY

Assessor fired for P25,000 in bribe

THE OMBUDSMAN, overseer of Region, Cebu, who has been in government service for 30 years, was ordered dismissed from service by the Ombudsman after she was caught guilty of graft for allegedly soliciting P25,000 from a landowner.

Ombudsman Ma. Merceditas Gutierrez found Angeles municipal assessor Annie M. Bacani guilty of grave misconduct for the offense, according to a statement released by her office on Friday.

Gutierrez also directed that Bacani be the disbursing officer of Atty. Ofs in Baga on Occidental for dishonesty, this time for failing to account for P1.8 million city funds, the same statement said. **Jhaves Gualberto Inquirer Visayas**

INQUIRER Northern Luzon

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Taking activism of IPs beyond national border

By Maurice Malanes
Baguio City

IN THIS GLOBALIZING world, activism should no longer be confined within one's national border.

Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, chair of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, said activism should also extend into international arenas such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the World Bank and other global institutions where international laws and policies, which impact on remote communities worldwide, are shaped and made.

Tauli-Corpuz, who also heads the Philippine-based Tebtebba (Indigenous Peoples' International Center for Policy Research and Education), spoke during the closing session of the First International Conference on Cordillera Studies at the University of the Philippines Baguio on Saturday.

She said the voices of the Igorots, Ifugaos (indigenous peoples of Mindanao) and other Philippine indigenous peoples should be raised in rhythmic cooperation with those of their counterparts worldwide.

The reason: The issues and problems that the world's indigenous peoples face in relation to rights to their lands, territories and resources are more or less the same because these are often the impact of global policies wrestled by the most powerful countries and transnational corporations.

"The collusion between the state, elite transnational and national corporations, the international financial institutions and trading hurdles is overwhelming; is powerful," said Tauli-Corpuz.

She said should not stifle indigenous peoples' power that we have," she added.

Evidence of power

She cited as "evidence of this power" some milestones in the struggle of indigenous peoples' activists in the international arena—the adoption on Sept. 13, 2007 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the setting up of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and assigning a UN special rapporteur on indigenous peoples' rights.

She said those who opposed the declaration's adoption were the most powerful countries of the world—the United States, Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

These powerful countries fought what indigenous peoples consider the "core responsibilities" of the declaration—the rights to ownership and control over lands, territories and resources as well as the right to self-determination, of which free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) and the right to development are the main components.

The four big countries also did not like the right to culture, which includes the right to use one's language, another core element of the declaration. They also questioned the concept of "collective rights."

In spite of the strong opposition from the world's most powerful nations, indigenous activists succeeded their governments to adopt the declaration, which had remained a draft for more than 20 years.

Tauli-Corpuz said even among indigenous activists themselves it was not easy organizing the declaration.

"It was not easy because we all came from different backgrounds, cultures and countries [developed and developing] and we have different histories of colonization," she said.

Negotiating the declaration was, therefore, a test for the indigenous peoples' movement in the global arena, she said.

"I feel in the end we demonstrated that we were capable of rising above our own individual issues and interests to unite on a common declaration," she said.

Lourdes Indab, Tauli-Corpuz said action of the 1960s and 1970s did not make a mistake when they decided to use the UN as "an arena for their struggle."

She said an international standard for preserving and respecting indigenous peoples' rights cannot be underestimated.

"[But] this is not to say that our problems as indigenous peoples are now solved in one satisfaction, bit-at-all," she said.

Who are the indigenous?

Scholar says Negritos are the 'original Filipinos'

By Vincent Cabreza
Baguio City

ALL THESE YEARS, SCHOOL teachers have put into the collective Philippine psyche that Filipinos belong to the Malay stock.

Now comes a language scholar, who has anchored influential studies about Cordillera and other Philippine languages for almost 50 years, who says that linguistic, archaeological and anthropological findings collected through the years prove that this assertion may have been wrong.

Based on a comprehensive study of Philippine language and dialects, Dr. Lawrence Reid, a New Zealand-born researcher emeritus of the University of Hawaii, dares the indigenous and mainstream Filipino to "listen about 4,000 years ago.

Reid says the people Filipinos call "indigenous" today are themselves immigrants to the country and have become a minority that has been marginalized by the state.

He says the "original Filipinos" everyone refers to are actually the Negritos, who are all but extinct in the country of their birth.

Reid has developed an influential body of work on Philippine languages—with the Ivatan language in the 1960s, a contribution in the Tinoday debate in the 1980s, and recently, with online dictionaries of a Mt. Province dialect that he speaks fluently.

In 2006, he was honored at the 30th International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics in Palawan.

A KALINGA woman and her grandchildren.

Uninformed

In a paper, entitled "Who are the Indigenous? Origins and Transformations," he presented to the First International Conference on Cordillera Studies held last week at the University of the Philippines Baguio, Reid asked the government to correct textbooks that contain "outdated and grossly erroneous statements about the cultural minorities."

The most prominent one Reid poked fun at belongs to the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), the agency tasked to administer, supervise and grant ancestral land titles to indigenous Filipinos.

"There are [in] materials that have apparently been taken from popular dress [room and old, long outdated history books that refer to the multiple migrations hypotheses of O.D. R. Otley Beyer, the leading Philippine ethnologist of his era and which I am told is commonly taught in Philippine schools today," he says.

He says the NCIP profiles the Ifugao as "descendants of the first wave of Malay immigrants to the country." The Kalinga are said to be descendants of the second group of Malays who came to the islands.

"The Ibaloi are described as 'powerful, hardworking, and hospitable inhabitants. They are generally fair in complexion and have well-developed bodies, usually standing four to five feet above in height, have medium and narrow noses and some have broad flat noses,'" he says.

Attention to the shape of the nose is also mentioned for the Kalinga [or Bontoksan,]" he says, as well as the Bagiuioi, the Ifugao of Isabela and the Ivatan of Batanes.

Biased and completely unscientific descriptions such as these are inconsistently read, and not only give completely erroneous descriptions of Philippine indigenous groups, but cast a very poor light on the level of Philippine scholarship," he says.

Who does the indigenous Filipino take after?

Reid says: "It is simply not true that the ancestors of Ifugaos or any Cordilleran people or of the Tagalogs or other lowland groups are descendants of the original inhabitants of the Philippines."

"When your ancestors first arrived in these islands, they were not unoccupied. They were scrupled by maybe hundreds of groups of Negritos, none of who have been completely assimilated or have died out," he says.

He says scientists have located 20 present-day groups of Negritos much who still thrive, although they are on the brink of extinction themselves.

Reid says the latest United Nations policy subscribes to the definition that indigenous peoples are "original inhabitants of a country, who inhabited the present territory of a country at a time when persons of a different culture or ethnic origin arrived there."

Negritos are "the true first Filipinos" who date back to 30,000 years, he says, while the Ifugao ancestors who reputedly built the world heritage enshrined rice terraces appeared to have arrived only 4,000 years ago "as their first colonizers."

"It is these first Filipinos who are the most downscrolden and woefully marginalized of all Filipinos, and most in need of urgent action to enable them to survive in this society," he says.

The Cordillera no longer hosts Negrito tribes, although Reid says anthropologists have found evidence that Aka Negritos of the Sierra Madre used to thrive in the Ifugao mountains.

Citing the discovery of ancient pottery shards in a cave in Ifugao, Batanes by archaeologist Peter Bellwood of the Australian National University, Reid says strong evidence "exists [for first colonizers] as being part of a Neolithic culture that existed in southeast Taiwan and [which] spread south from there into the Batanes islands and Northern Luzon."

He says the archaeologist supports irrefutable linguistic evidence debunking the "pre-scientific myth that Philippine languages are somehow corrupted versions of Malay as a result of multiple migrations from the south."

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NEWS

Connie Francis at the Big Dome: At peace at 69

By Pachoia Concepcion
Entertainment

IT SEEMS THAT AMERICAN POP hit-maker Connie Francis has finally found the happiness that eluded her at the height of her stardom in the 1960s, and the peace of mind she had sought after a harrowing meltdown in the '70s.

Now 69, Francis, who extended some of the world's most popular songs in her time—among them "Who's Sorry Now," "Where the Boys Are," "Among" and "Stupid Cupid"—is still active as a concert performer.

In a phone conversation yesterday she told Inquirer she was glad to finally visit Manila, among her biggest fan bases, even if it's just for a one-night stopover en route tomorrow to the Aurora Civic Center.

Married four times and once romantically linked to another pop icon, Bobby Darin, Francis described her life as "a Greek tragedy."

"I never through some bad relationships," she admitted. Looking back, Francis said Darin was her one true love, and not marrying him was "the biggest mistake" of her life.

She had recently obeyed her instinct, who had insisted that Darin was to be avoided at all costs. "Bobby was big; cocky, a ladies' man ... so sure of himself," Francis recalled. They had met in the mid-'50s, when they were both struggling to make it in the business. "My father didn't want him for me."

Oftentimes in her father was cited as what led her to a music career. Francis said Sam Concetta Rose Maria Franconero in the Italian neighborhood of Newark, New Jersey she would be pop star was made to take accordion lessons at age 5.

"Music was my father's life," Francis said. "He was very poor. He wanted me to become an accordion teacher because he loved to play the instrument."

She was 4 when she first played the accordion in public, at an amusement park in New Jersey. "I hated it," she recalled. "When I really wanted was to sing like my idol, Doris Page, whose songs I faithfully listened to on the radio."

Francis pursued her chosen. Signed to MGM Records in the mid-'50s, her first nine singles failed to make all. The latest succeeded dropping her.

But in 1958, her cover version of an old hit, "Who's Sorry Now?"

CONNIE Francis during her press briefing at Edsa Shangri-La

(from the 1920 movie, "A Night in Casablanca") went straight to No. 4 on the billboard chart, sold a million copies, spent six weeks at No. 1 in the UK, and made her a multimillion-singing sensation.

Francis proceeded to become famous primarily for remakes of beloved old standards, distinct in a distinct "sobbing" style. But she also championed herself as a flexible vocal stylist, shining in such early rock 'n' roll cuties as "Stupid Cupid," which she recorded after obtaining permission from songwriter Neil Sedaka.

Sedaka subsequently penned what would become her all-time signature hit, "Where the Boys Are."

The tune became the title song of a 1960s film in which Francis also debuted as an actress. By this time, she had achieved the level of popularity that would translate to hit TV shows and a nine-year stint in Las Vegas.

But her personal life was in shambles.

A marriage in 1964, rumored to go against his father's wishes, ended in divorce three months later. A second marriage in 1971 was dissolved after a year, followed by two more unsuccessful unions.

She didn't bear children of her own. She has an adopted son, now aged 33.

In 1974, Francis was raped in a room of a Summa motel after a concert in New York. She used the motel for hiding to provide adequate security. And though she won a $2-million in damning the incident left such a deep gash in her mind, that she withdrew from the public eye and didn't sing for seven years.

It was till behind her now, she said. She staged a successful comeback in 1980 and soon she insisted, things "couldn't be better." In fact, she just wrote a new song with Sedaka, "We'll Be," a heartbreaking a new vocal, she cheerfully announced.

She said the fact that this was only her first time to perform in the Manila. "I remember getting so much fan mail from the Philippines," she said. "Still, letters late than never!"

She is set to perform her trademark hauntingly songs as well as the happy, upbeat ones. Darin had taught her a lot, she said, in terms of singing technique. "And he taught me how to sing rock 'n' roll."

And there for a few seconds, Connie sounded genuine. "Bobby, ..." she sighed, "we broke each other's hearts."

Aplus METRO
Editor Ester C. Dycaoco
Tell us your feedback: [illegible] E-mail us: [illegible]

Investor sues Bunevacz

Return ₱1.8M to firm, former decathlete told

By Tina G. Santos

ONE OF THE TOP OFFICIALS AND INVESTORS OF A HIGH-END beauty clinic in Makati City has filed charges against former decathlete David Bunevacz for the alleged illegal disbursement of more than P1.8 million in company funds.

Atanacio Hu, acting chair and director of the Beverly Hills 9700 Cosmetic Surgery and Skin Institute Clinic charged Bunevacz with estafa in the Manila Prosecutor's Office on Monday afternoon. Hu is also one of the clinic's investors.

Bunevacz was the clinic's president and chief executive officer until he resigned on Nov. 27, 2007 amid reports that his business associates had accused him of embezzling company funds. Hu, wife Jessica, a former talent manager, was in charge of the clinic's publicity.

Last December, the couple left for the United States for what they said was their annual Christmas vacation.

A few days before their departure, Bunevacz filed a complaint to the National Bureau of Investigation against four of his business partners whom he accused of misbranding him. He also told the NBI that the four men took the ₱2M that he said was worth P1 million and his reputation.

In his affidavit-complaint, Hu said that Bunevacz, as the clinic's president and CEO, was authorized to sign checks in the company's behalf.

Around times in 2006 and 2007, Hu said that Bunevacz asked him, as one of the clinic's investors, to advance some money for the clinic's operational expenses.

"Since I trusted him (Bunevacz) completely that and considering that Beverly Hills, being a multi-awn corporation, would conceivably need operational funds, I willingly advanced money whenever requested," he said.

He added: "Sometime in the last quarter of 2007, however, reports about the respondent's lavish lifestyle came to my attention, and it raised my suspicion about the way he was managing the operations of Beverly Hills."

The prompted him and other investors, namely Benjamin Sytin, Louie Gan, Teresa Ong and Cedric Lee, to hire auditors to conduct an audit of the clinic's operations, he said.

BNIESTER A21

People near the Landmark Place in Quezon City were alarmed yesterday when several men in black repelled down the building and unfurled a huge billboard with the caption "Get Ready for Cebu's Biggest Surprise." People were left intrigued, waiting for what this surprise is. The men left no clue about what will happen next.

Cop convicted of murder

By DJ Yap

AFTER MORE THAN A DECADE, a policeman was convicted yesterday of murdering a former security officer of Boo Chapman Field V Banzon over a leadership dispute in a Cebu homeowners association.

Judge Zenaida Galapate-Laguilles found SPO3 Dominador Estandez guilty of murder and sentenced him to the maximum penalty of reclusion perpetua, which ranges from 20 to 40 years in jail with no chance of parole.

In a 26-page decision, the presiding judge of the Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 143 also ordered Estandez to pay the family of the victim, Elizabeth Rodriguez, civil, moral and exemplary damages amounting to P2.719 million.

Gonzales was accused of murdering Rodriguez, a former employee of the Presidential Electoral Tribunal's security unit.

(SEE A23)

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Rodriguez town turns away garbage trucks

Investor sues Bunevacz

From page A12

According to him, the initial result of the audit revealed that Bunevacz had authorized the release of more than P1.8 million in company funds.

"The result of the audit report was shocking," Ho said, adding that "the auditors flagged down an anomalous several check disbursements of corporate funds that were signed and authorized by the respondent, principally Senator Bunevacz even if the purposes are not at all related to the operations of the company."

Bunevacz, Ho said, was charged to the company his family's personal travel expenses.

He cited a Beverly Hills check voucher dated June 5, 2007 and signed by Bunevacz approving the release of a check for P139,286.

Records showed that the check was deposited in the account of Island Travel and Tours at the Equitable PCI Bank Wack Wack Greenhills branch on June 7, 2007. It was not on that day that the latest was for a four-day Christmas stay in a Boracay resort which was availed of by Bunevacz, his wife Jessica, their three children and a woman identified as Jannette Tiaco.

"The family vacation was not authorized nor approved by the Board of Directors as a legitimate business expense of Beverly Hills," Ho said. "Clearly, he patently abusing the trust and confidence given to him as president of the company. Bunevacz caused the disbursement of funds for his personal use to the prejudice of the company."

Last Nov. 27, Ho said he and the other investors confronted Bunevacz with the auditors' initial findings.

"When asked to explain the anomalous transactions, (Bunevacz) could not give a satisfactory explanation. After realizing that it would be difficult to cover up his anomalies, respondent immediately resigned as president and board member," Ho said.

A lawyer for Beverly Hills directed works for Bunevacz on Dec. 26 to formally demand that he return the P1.8 million in company funds he had distributed.

He said, however, that they did not receive any response from Bunevacz.

By CJ Yap

THE SIGN "PAY AS YOU USE charge" whereby being implemented by the government of Rodriguez town in Rizal province had a untidy aftermath Dozens of garbage trucks unable to dispose of their cargo.

As many as 300 out of 1,000 garbage trucks from Metro Manila remained full after the delegate Mayor Pedro Cuerpo enforced the payment policy that requires the payment of P1,000 as tipping fee for dumping their contents at the dump for failing to pay on the spot P1,000 in hauling fees.

It also reinstated similar fees the preventive suspension of Rodriguez Mayor Pedro Cuerpo would affect garbage collection in the municipality. In the long run, MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando said.

He said the agency was still trying to check whether the town would step or continue enforcing its policy that required garbage truck drivers to pay hauling fee upon entering the landfill.

Cuerpo was ordered suspended for 90 days beginning the other day by the Rizal provincial board for a misdemeanor ordinance which charged users of the landfill a "dereliction fee."

According to the board, the municipal government was not authorized to draft the ordinance.

Cuerpo, however, self-appointed for work yesterday. "I still have to be served legal notice of my suspension. But even if such a notice is sent, I will continue to report for work," he said.

He added that the suspension order issued against him was "baseless and bereft of any legal basis."

"It is pure, unadulterated malice and abuse of power and authority by the Rizal governor and members of the provincial board," Cuerpo said.

The Rizal provincial government is locked to a legal battle with Cuerpo over who between them is entitled to the tipping, hauling and other fees being charged for the use of the landfill.

Last Monday, the start of the implementation of the new payment scheme, garbage haulers were reminded to use alternative dumping grounds in San Pedro, Laguna, Cloth, Bumpango, Norzagaray, and Pantabangan.

The MMDA earlier said it did not expect the new policy to affect garbage collection and disposal in Metro Manila.

It added, however, that there would be a delay to collections during what it called the "adjustment period" although MMDA General Manager Robert Bautista did not say how long this would be.

Arrest warrants out for 14 persons

By Rachel Raines

A QUEZON CITY REGIONAL TRIAL COURT judge has ordered the arrest of a woman, her four children and nine of their associates accused of defrauding several businessmen of over P100 million through operations fund stock.

Ordered arrested by Judge Alexander Reluz of Branch 76 were Delia Lantimon Pedro, daughters Ma. Cheryl, Genevieve and Jessica Odilon and son Odilon for syndicated estafa.

Also named in the arrest warrant were Salvador Gaudo Jr., Rosalio Ladonna Jr., Beatriz Ermary, Erlinda Guerzon, Kathy Gutierrez, Archelita Lim, Elsa Soliman, Perla Fernandez and Joseph Arnolfo.

A group of businessmen accused the suspects of belonging to a "fund scam syndicate" headed by Pedro.

"The modus operandi of these people was to lure readers to acquiring vast sum funds in the provinces. But after their return easy for the prospects, they said refused to pocket the money or put the property under their names," Ferdinand Topacio, the businessmen's lawyer, told reporters.

More than, they should enroll the property to other victims," he added.

DID YOU KNOW

SINCE 2004, 9,600 KANDOS of couples have been flocking to different Philippine cities, every February to its fiesta anniversary. The first "Consolacion, "held on Palaez Boulevard in Manila, was attended by 5,122 couples. It was sponsored by the city government and a toothpaste manufacturer.

This record was broken last year when 6,124 couples kissed simultaneously outside the Mall of Asia in Pasay City. Lucio Tan's group was also beaten in the cities of Cebu, Davao and Baguio.

Cyril C. Bautista, Inquirer Research

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Notice is hereby given to the public that a Criminal Case has been filed in the Regional Trial Court of Makati City, Branch 133 against Hamdani Hasan for Frustrated Murder (Criminal Case No. 07-0992). The Court has issued a Warrant of Arrest for her apprehension.

Ibrahim Kasan is an Indian National who currently lived at No. 2525-D Cadmo Street, Barangay Poblacion, Makati City. If you have any information as to the whereabouts of **Hamdaap Kasan**, please notify the police/local authorities.

Atty. Marquez Lopez

Cop convicted ...

From page A12

torney group, who was also part of Kasten' security detail, in May 1996 in General Trias, Cavite.

In 1995, the accused and the victim was for the top post of the homeowners association of the Fabulary 2000 housing project, a community of retirees and relatives in Tropical Village. Its delgacy was in the district.

Court records showed that on May 3, 1996, Rodriguez was talking to three residents when two suspects in a motorcycle suddenly shot him. The victim managed to run for several meters before he fell. Gonzales then approached and repeatedly shot him.

In his decision, Legaspi the said the denied the positive identification of the accused to be "credible and remarkable for its details," and for not weighed Gonzales' mere defenses of alibi and denial.

The case was transferred to the Manila RTC after the accused filed a petition, citing the influence Senior Supt. Prospero Emmanuel Velasco allegedly wielded in Cavite, which he claimed could affect the way the case is decided. Velasco was the case prosecutor.

METROBRIEFS

QC cops identify 3 bank rob suspects

AS THE ACTUATORS of the Eastern City Police District have identified three of the men that 20 armed men who robbed the Union Bank branch in Timog Avenue, Quezon City last week, an official said yesterday. Supt. Rodolfo Mendoza Mabalay, chief of the SDPB Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit, said they will file robbery charges against the alleged members of the Rangers Robbery Group within the week. He added that the cops were also pursuing the names of nine soldiers who were inside the bank. Mabalay said they were identified through footages they got from the bank's close circuit television cameras and other documents. However, he declined to identify the three to avoid disrupting ongoing follow up operations. "We expect to file the case within this week. We're just waiting for the certification of the bank regarding the amount they lost to be sufficient," he told the Inquirer. Mabalay said the syndicate is composed of a number of policemen and soldiers who were discharged from the service for various offenses.

Marlon Ramos

Robber nabbed after taking student's cell phone

A HOLDUP man was arrested on Monday evening, an hour after he robbed a 16-year-old morning student of his cellular phone in Gabriel St., Barangay Pembo, Makati City. The suspect, Eugene "Bombo" Galleta, was nabbed by the Tagpig and Makati police in Barangay Pinal, Makati City. Tagpig City police chief Supt. Alfred Corpuz identified the victim as Chatreuh Sermudez, a student of the Global City Innovative College in Fort Bonifacio. Corpuz said policemen from the Tagpig City Police Community Precinct 7 and Makati City's PCP 9 conducted the joint operation. The policemen were able to identify Galleta's whereabouts and recover the victim's cell phone from him. The suspect was turned over to the Makati City police station, which has jurisdiction over the crime scene, for further investigation and disposition. Tagpig City Mayor Fredie Tinga, meanwhile, lauded the immediate arrest of the suspect and cited the police for their quick response.

Julie M. Aurelio

Republic of the Philippines
NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Pelaez Bldg., North Ave., Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
Supply and Delivery of Fifty (50) units Digital Electronic Platform Scale

For NAFOMAN, FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA), now invites qualified Bids from eligible Bidders for the Supply and Delivery of fifty (50) units Digital Electronic Platform Scales, with an Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) of P1,500,000.00 herein (Million Five Hundred Thousand only) (P1,500,000.00).

Delivery of the Goods is required within sixty (60) days from receipt of the Notice to Proceed.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations with at least a sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 7432 (R.A. 7432), Only duly Pre-Qualified Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The bidders who have submitted the Pre-Qualification (PQ) shall indicate on the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine its responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall only be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information and inspect the Bidding Documents at the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) Secretariat, Mr. Cortez C. Cruz Area Shop Manager, BAC vice Mr. Ma. Dolores Fernandez, Division Chief, BAC, NFA, Mr. F. Pelaez Bldg., North Ave., Diliman, Quezon City tel. No. 451-2000 local 6221 or 454-1214, from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be acquired by interested Bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee, in cash, in the amount of P10,000. Tax Precedent only (P10,000.00).

The Bidding Schedule is as follows:

Issuance of Eligibility Requirements and Bidding Documents	February 13 to 20, 2008
Pre-bidding Conference	February 20, 2008, 10:00 AM
Deadline for the Submission of Bids; Opening of Bids	March 05, 2008, 10:00 AM (Bids will be immediately after Submission of bids)

The venue for the Pre-bidding Conference and Submission and Opening of Bids shall be at the NFA Board Room, 4th F. Pelaez Bldg., North Ave., Diliman, Quezon City.

All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the form of Cash, Manager's Check or Cashier's Check, in the amount required above in the amount (5%) of the Approved Budget for the Contract. Late Bids will not be accepted.

It is required that prospective bidders must have a single largest contract completed within the last five (5) years and similar to the contract to bid, which value adjusted to current prices must be at least fifty percent (50%) of the approved budget for the contract.

The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, and to cancel the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) LUDOVICO G. JARINA
Deputy Administrator for Operations and Chairman, BAC

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
4/F Philippine Bldg., 1901 Intramuros St., Jones Lane Quezon City, Ortigas, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Pursuant to Secondary guidelines that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office applications for Alien Employment Permits:

Name and Address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/Citizenship	Position
FLETHUR DEVELOPMENTS CORPORATION (F. Development) Commercial Business Center) Bldg., 121 Paseo de Roxas cor. Makati St., Makati City	Jeffrey Bird Ong (British)	Senior Vice President-Corporate Development
CHAIR AT CONGRESS INC. AND EQUIPMENT SUPPLIES CORP. (Unit 2014 EDSA Bldg., 1880 Edsa St., Mandaluyong City)	Jung Chul Seo (Korean)	Vice President for Marketing (Korea)
KEY COMMUNICATIONS PHILS. INC. (7/F Philippine Stock Exchange Bldg., Ortigas Center, Pasig City)	Christ Ann Lee (Indian)	General Manager
STEEL PHILIPPINES CORPORATION (7/F Tytana Plaza, Ortigas Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City)	Mohamed Ahmed Ramadan (Egyptian)	Operations Manager
THE "ALL YOUR SPECIALTY GROCERY STORE" (1/F Gaisano Mall of Makati, Ayala Ave. cor. Amorsolo Street, Makati City)	Sachin Chand Mandalia (Indian)	General Manager
PHIL. METS WIRE LENDING INVESTOR & TRADING CO. (2/F Ortigas Ctr., Mrs. Mezzanine, Quezon City)	Pardeep Singh Kochar (Indian)	Operation Manager
BRITISH AMERICAN TOBACCO (MANUFACTURING) LTD. (12/F Citibank Tower, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City)	Sunil Kumar Gupta (Singaporean)	Supply Project Manager
FRANCESCOMETTY INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION, INC. (8/F Landmark Bldg., Ayala Ave. cor. Makati Ave., Makati City)	Gangjie Jiang (Canadian)	Operation Manager
PHILIPPINE SUGAR MILLING (2/F Corinthian Plaza Bldg., Paseo de Roxas, Makati City)	Ghanshyam Bhandari (Nepalese)	Shipping Manager - Asia
INTERCOCO EXPORTS LTD. (2/F Ayala Triangle Gardens Tower 2, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City)	Lachhman Bhavnagadhani (Hindu) (Indian)	Manufacturer's Engineer
INTERCOCO EXPORTS LTD. (2/F Ayala Triangle Gardens Tower 2, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City)	Daniel Anthony Hugh (Australian)	Project Land Quality
A.T.E. FREIGHT PHILS., INC. (Unit 20, Roundtrade Bldg., 1 Jupiter St., Bel-Air 2, Makati City, Philippines)	Kate Green (Australian)	President

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned applications please communicate with the Regional Director.

ATTY. RAYMUNDO D. ALEJANDRO
OIC, Regional Director

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education
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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

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(Sgd.) LUDOVICO G. JARINA
Deputy Administrator for Operations and Chairman, BAC

Death penalty sought for 9/11 conspirators

WASHINGTON—MILITARY PROsecutors are seeking the death penalty against suspected al-Qaida defendants on murder and conspiracy charges in the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States, the Pentagon said Monday.

The Defense Department announced the charges against Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the self-confessed mastermind of the attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people, and five others in "significant terrorism."

But the move immediately drew under fire from human rights groups, rekindling the heated controversy that has dogged the special process that the United States has put in place to try "war on terror" suspects.

Adding fuel to the row is the new the CIA's admission only a week ago that waterboarding, a form of simulated drowning widely denounced as torture, was used nearly three years ago to interrogate one of Mohammed.

In announcing the charges, Brig. Gen. Thomas Hartmann said the military judge hearing the cases will determine whether the evidence presented is admissible.

"There will be no secret trials," he told reporters.

"Every piece of evidence, every article of evidence, every behalf of evidence that goes to the defendant. In fact, to the jury, to the military tribunal will be reviewed by the accused, subject to cross-examination, subject to cross-examination, subject to confrontation, subject to cross-examination, subject to challenge," he said.

The question of what rules evidence will be admitted, whether waterboarding or other, will be decided in the courtroom by a panel of military officers or by a judge alone if a has been fought out by the defense and the prosecutors."

If the six, only Mohammed was subjected to waterboarding, according to CIA director Michael Hayden.

But five of the accused were part of a secret CIA interrogation program that included the use of other "enhanced" interrogation techniques.

Opponents of the military commissions, who have long charged that they are stilted in favor of "war on terror" convictions, said the trials would not be credible.

"They are unlawful, unconstitutional, and a perversion of justice," the Center for Constitutional Rights, a legal rights group that has represented some "war on terror" detainees, said of the military commission trials. AFP

WORLD-BRIEFS

Journalists

SADRA—Security forces have launched a manhunt for two journalists from the American television network CBS who were kidnapped and tortured in the Iraqi city of Basra, an official said Tuesday. "There is an extensive operation underway to find the journalists," interior ministry spokesperson Maj. Gen. Abdul Karim Khalaf told AFP. Witnesses said the journalists were led away from the Palace Sultan Hotel in the southern city of Basra on a convoy led by a gang of about 10 gunmen on Sunday after having received the permission of the previous day. AFP

Taliban nabbed

QUETTA—Pakistani security forces arrested a senior commander close to Mullah Omar, the leader of the Taliban militia with Afghanistan before Mullah Omar's regime was toppled by the U.S.-led coalition in late 2001, a senior intelligence official said Tuesday. Mullah Rashid Khan was arrested in the Pakistani city of Quetta, the capital of Baluchistan province bordering Afghanistan. Reuters

Espionage

WASHINGTON—A U.S. defense official said Monday that two former Boeing engineers and two others were charged Monday with spying for China in what the agency said was the first espionage conspiracy involving the U.S. Justice Department said passed a "grave danger" to national security. Pentagon official Greg Whitten Berg, Chinese citizens Yuefei Ming and Tai Shao were from US citizen Tai Shen that were arrested in a month-long undercover effort into motion to China, mostly pertaining to US military sales to Taiwan, according to Justice Department officials. AFP

Europe lab

ROTTERDAM—Astronauts confidently docked with the European space laboratory Columbus on the orbiting International Space Station, giving Europe an important footstep for deeper exploration of space. "The European Columbus module is officially part of the International Space Station," said French space engineer Léopold Eyharts, as Nasa broadcast live images of the docking. AFP

UNPRECEDENTED
Jenny-Lee Prince Minister Kevin Rudd (top, center) poses with Aboriginal leaders at parliament house in Canberra on Feb. 13. Australia's parliament opened with a rare Aboriginal ceremony on Rudd prepares to make a landmark apology on Feb. 13 to Aborigines forcibly removed from their families. AP

Court orders Suharto heirs to defend $1.5-B graft case

JAKARTA—A $1.5 BILLION CIVIL SUIT against former Indonesian President Suharto for graft must now be defended by one of his six children following his death last month, a Jakarta district court said on Tuesday.

Suharto, who presided over extensive business interests during the former strongman's three decades in power, including banks, toll roads, car manufacturers, airlines and television stations.

Transparency International ranked Suharto, who died in hospital at the age of 86 on Jan. 27, as the world's leading kleptocrat with ill-gotten estimated at $15 billion–$35 billion.

Last year, Indonesian prosecutors filed a civil suit, seeking a total of $440 million of state funds and a further $1.09 billion in damages for alleged misuse of funds held by one of Suharto's foundations, the Supersemar Foundation.

On Tuesday, the presiding judge in the case ordered the prosecutor to nominate one of Suharto's six children, who according to Muslim custom are all considered to be fair heirs, as a defendant in that the graft case could resume.

Prosecutor Dachmer Munthe said the court had not decided who would take Suharto's place as defendant, but that all three sheikh into and that he or one would be nominated to a court hearing next week.

"Suharto's death will not affect the proceedings of this case in any way. The law clearly says if the defendant died, his heir will be summoned to continue the case," Munthe told reporters. Suharto was ousted in 1998 amid political and economic chaos. While he is credited by many for pulling millions of Indonesians out of poverty, he was also characterized by human rights abuses and widespread corruption.

The civil suit against Suharto is seen as an important test of the government's commitment to clamp down on widespread corruption.

The foundation collected donations from businessmen and other sources to provide scholarships. Many organizations regarded such donations as more or less compulsory during Suharto's rule.

In previous hearings, prosecutors told the court that during the 1980s and 1990s, the foundation paid money to companies owned by members of the Suharto family or their close associates.

These included a privately owned bank, an airline controlled by one of Suharto's sons, a logging firm, and a cooperative linked to Golkar, the political party which was run by Suharto and which is now a member of the ruling coalition.

Critics say the former general and his family amassed as much as $40 billion in kickbacks or deals, but Suharto and his family always denied any wrongdoing. Reuters

UN agency: La Niña to persist until midyear or longer

GENEVA—THE LA NIÑA WEATHER PHEnomenon that has caused droughts in the United States and flooding in Africa has not significantly cold last until midyear or longer, the UN weather agency said Monday.

The weather changes resulting from the cooling of sea temperatures in the Pacific Ocean have increased in the Americas, Africa and Asia, the World Meteorological Organization said.

WMO said the phenomenon "has important effects on the global weather, particularly rainfall." It said it typically was associated with increases in the frequency of heavy rain in the surrounding area.

It stopped short of specific forecasts for the Pacific area for the rest of the world, but in the past La Niña has been associated with droughts, floods and violent storms in different parts of the world.

The shift in the air mass caused by La Niña has been linked in the United States to Feb. 5 to reduce that killed at least 10 people, fourth-one Arizona flooding this year in Morocco has left more than 30 people dead.

WMO had predicted last October that the phenomenon would last until March.

But it said on Monday that it now appeared likely that it would persist until June or July and could last longer. It said it was still difficult at this stage to predict how long.

"During the last three months, La Niña conditions have become slightly stronger," a WMO statement said. "Sea surface temperatures are now about 1.5 to 2 degrees Celsius colder than average over large parts of the central an eastern Equatorial Pacific."

The La Niña had been in the average range of such events, but the worst cooling will likely put it in the strongest three-average category, WMO said. AP

Microsoft renews bid for Yahoo

SAN FRANCISCO—SHARES REJECTED on Monday of Microsoft's buyout offer sets the stage for the $31 software giant to up the ante in an attempt a coup by sacking the Internet search pioneer's board.

Yahoo's board of directors spurned Microsoft's takeover bid, saying the $44.6 billion offer is too low and not what it lives for shareholders of the venerable Internet company.

Yahoo said it decided "after careful evaluation" that Microsoft's bid "undervalues Yahoo." Microsoft's bid "is absent any indication that the proposal is not in the best interests of Yahoo and our stakeholders," it said.

Microsoft called the board's action "unfortunate" And urged Yahoo to reconsider its blockbuster bid to combine the two tech titans and said it offers "superior value" to Yahoo shareholders.

"No we have said previously, Microsoft reserves the right to pursue all necessary steps to ensure that Yahoo's shareholders are provided with the opportunity to realize the value inherent in our proposal," Microsoft said.

Microsoft, which called its bid "full and fair," could switch from seeing Yahoo's leaders to declaring war on them by waking allies of shareholders in order to oust board members at annual elections next year.

Microsoft has been in hostile takeover gear for re-election. The deadline for board member candidates or nominees is in March.

A small group of Yahoo shareholders last week filed a civil suit against the California company in a state court for not accepting a $31 Microsoft made for the company early last year, although the offer later was dropped.

"Based on conversations with stakeholders of both companies, we are confident that moving forward promptly to commence a transaction is in the best interests of all parties," Microsoft said in its release. "The Yahoo response does not change our belief in the synergies and financial merits of our proposal."

Yahoo has rules in place that prevent Microsoft from being able to buy more than a 15-percent stake in the company directly from shareholders, or a hostile takeover using "shareholder" is not feasible. AFP

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

NOTICE TO THE DEPOSITORS OF THE CLOSED BANKWISE, INC. (BW)

1. Pursuant to Monetary Board Resolution No. 113 dated February 7, 2008 ordering the closure of the Bankwise, Inc. (BW), the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC) will start its operations for the exclusive purpose of effecting payment of insured deposits in the closed bank on **Wednesday, February 13, 2008** at 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon.

2. Depositors are requested to proceed directly to the premises of their respective branches where they can file their claims with the PDIC representatives during office hours (8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.), Monday to Friday, except Holidays, to wit:

Banking Unit	Office Address	Payout Period
Head Office	6/F SW House Ortigas Road Bldg., ac. Ortigas Ave., Pasig, Metro Manila	Feb. 13 - 22, 2008
Tutuban Branch	G/L Bldg. 467 Mayon St. cor. Rizal Ave., Brgy. Balibago, Mandaluyong City	Feb. 13 - 22, 2008
Las Piñas Branch	2/F Tabernacle Bldg., Alvarez Rd. Brgy. Talon I, Las Piñas City	Feb. 13 - 22, 2008
Timog Branch	2/F Cabrera I Bldg., #122 E.R. Garcia Ave., Brgy. Sacred Heart, cor. Quezon, Quezon City	Feb. 13 - 22, 2008
Cubao Branch	2/F Cubao Square, Inc. Bldg., #1 Gen. Romulo Ave., cor. Aurora Blvd., Cubao, Quezon City	Feb. 13 - Mar. 5, 2008
Davao Branch	2/F Margarita Plaza Bldg., J. Camus St. cor. Quirino St., Davao City	Feb. 13 - 22, 2008

After the said date, all depositors can file their claims personally at the PDIC Claims Counter, 6/F Head Office, SW House Ortigas Road Bldg., ac. Ortigas Ave., Pasig, Metro Manila, Monday to Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. or by mail to:

The Assistant Vice President
Claims Processing Department
Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation
Citystate Centre, 709 Shaw Boulevard
Pasig City

3. Depositors are advised to present the following requirements to the PDIC representatives when filing their claims:

a. Original evidence of deposit such as Savings Passbook, Certificate of Time Deposit, or Bank Statement including Unused Checks;
b. Two (2) valid identification cards/documents (IDs) with depositor's signature.

Other documents may be required by the PDIC representatives in the course of their processing of claims filed.

4. Pursuant to the provisions of R.A. 3591, as amended by R.A. 9302, the last day for filing claims for insured deposits in the closed Bankwise, Inc. is on **February 4, 2013**. After February 5, 2013, PDIC, as insurer, shall no longer accept any claim for insured deposits maintained with the said closed bank.

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

NOTICE TO THE DEPOSITORS OF THE CLOSED COOPERATIVE RURAL BANK OF AKLAN (CRBA)

1. Pursuant to Monetary Board Resolution No. 109 dated January 30, 2008 ordering the closure of The Cooperative Rural Bank of Aklan, the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC) will start its operations for the servicing of claims for insured deposits in the closed bank on **Thursday, February 7, 2008**.

2. Depositors are requested to proceed directly to the premises of their respective branches where they can file their claims with the PDIC representatives during office hours (8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.), Monday to Friday, except Holidays, to wit:

Banking Unit	Office Address	Payout Period
Head Office	Toting Reyes St., Kalibo, Aklan	Feb. 7 to 25, 2008
Altavas Branch	Altavas, Aklan	Feb. 7 to 21, 2008
Nabas Branch	Nabas, Aklan	Feb. 7 to 26, 2008
Malay Branch	Malay, Aklan	Feb. 7 to 21, 2008
Pandan Branch	Pandan, Antique	Feb. 7 to 21, 2008

After the said date, all depositors can file their claims personally at the PDIC Claims Counter, 6/F Head Office, SW House Ortigas Road Bldg., ac. Ortigas Ave., Pasig, Metro Manila, Monday to Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. or by mail to:

The Assistant Vice President
Claims Processing Department
Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation
709 Shaw Boulevard
Pasig City

3. Depositors are advised to present the following requirements to the PDIC representatives when filing their claims:

a. Original evidence of deposit such as Savings Passbook, Certificate of Time Deposit, or Bank Statement including Unused Checks;
b. Two (2) valid identification cards/documents (IDs) with depositor's signature.

Other documents may be required by the PDIC representatives in the course of their processing of claims filed.

4. Pursuant to the provisions of R.A. 3591, as amended by R.A. 9302, the last day for filing claims for insured deposits in the closed Cooperative Rural Bank of Aklan is on **February 1, 2013**. After February 1, 2013, PDIC, as insurer, shall no longer accept any claim for insured deposits maintained by the said closed bank.

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

The WORLD

Edna Lorraine B. Olonan

East Timor declares state of emergency

Ramos-Horta in serious but stable condition

DILI—EAST TIMOR DECLARED A STATE OF EMERGENCY TUESDAY after rebel attacks on the country's top leaders left the president in "extremely serious" condition with gunshot wounds.

The assassination attempts on Monday against President Jose Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao—East Timor's independence heroes—filmed the desperately poor country into a fresh crisis amid fears of more unrest and political turmoil.

Surgeons operated on Ramos-Horta for three hours overnight to remove bullet fragments and repair his chest wounds. Dr. Lia Nelson, the general manager of the Royal Darwin Hospital, told the Australian Broadcasting Corp. Tuesday.

"He's conditions remains extremely serious but by the same token, stable," Nelson said. "The next few days will be the telling point. I believe he is enormously lucky to be alive."

Ramos-Horta, who won the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize for his nonviolent resistance to the decades-long Indonesian occupation, was shot in the chest and stomach by gunmen in two cars around dawn on Monday, officials said.

Rebel soldiers apparently attacked Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao's motorcade an hour later. The former guerrilla fighter escaped unhurt.

The country's two fugitive, Alfredo Reinado, and one of his men were killed in the attack on the president. One of the president's guards also died.

Acting President Vicente Guterres announced the two-day emergency in an address on national television. The order bans demonstrations, gives police extraordinary powers of search of arrest and calls for a nighttime curfew.

"Our country is right now in an extraordinary situation where a state of emergency will bring us back to normality," Guterres said. "I ask for your help."

As he spoke, international soldiers and police patrolled the streets of the capital, Dili, and imposed new curfews on roadblocks. By midday most shops and businesses were open and traffic was normal. There were no immediate reports of unrest.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon decried the "brutal and unspeakable attack" on Ramos-Horta. The Security Council in a statement on Monday called on the nation's people to remain calm and for its government "to bring those responsible for this heinous act" to justice.

Jessie Akiwa's UN ambassador, Dumisani Kumalo, who led a council mission to East Timor, told reporters at UN headquarters in New York that the president was shot as he took his regular morning walk.

"Our report is that they went to the house looking for him and discovered that he was on his walk and that's where they attacked him," Kumalo said. "He's a very simple man ... a man of the people and sometimes you pay a price for that."

Ramos-Horta, 58, first underwent surgery at an Australian army hospital in East Timor before being sedated, attached to a ventilator and airlifted to the hospital in the northern Australian city of Darwin. AP

UNITED Malaysia Police guard in front of East Timor presidential palace in Dili on Feb. 12 after the assassination attempt on Timorese President Jose Ramos-Horta. AP

JOINT STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

MODUCLASSE DESIGN CORPORATION, in cooperation with Autodesk, Inc. support the government's efforts against software piracy.

MODUCLASSE DESIGN CORPORATION fully believes in and supports the cause of Autodesk, Inc. The illegal use of unlicensed software must be put to a stop.

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MODUCLASSE DESIGN CORPORATION urges all persons, companies, and corporations to use only legal, licensed software.

(PDI) February 13, 2008

Bhutto knew names of her assassins

NEW YORK—FORMER OPPOSITION leader Benazir Bhutto wrote and Nawaz Sharif, two months before her murder at a Pakistan election rally.

Bhutto wrote in "Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy and the West," which was published worldwide on Tuesday, that Pakistani officials told her four suicide bomber squads had been sent by Taliban-linked militant groups to kill her.

"I had actually received from a sympathetic Muslim foreign government the names and cell numbers of designated assassins," said Bhutto, who accused Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf of not doing enough to protect her or investigate the threats.

Bhutto, 54, who twice served as prime minister of Pakistan, said she sent a letter to Musharraf before returning to her homeland in October in which she identified people in the Pakistani intelligence service whom she said would be responsible for her murder-first.

"I told him if I was assassinated by the militants it would be due to the sympathizers of the militants in his regime, who I suspected wanted to eliminate me and remove the threat I posed to their grip on power," Bhutto wrote in the 218-page book published by Simon Cost/Gilchrist Collins.

Bhutto survived a bomb attack—one of the deadliest in Pakistan's history, killing at least 139 people—when she returned in October after an eight-year exile.

But she was killed after a bomb and gun attack at the end of a Dec. 27 rally ahead of planned Jan. 8 national elections. The poll are now due Feb. 18.

Musharraf's government blamed al-Qaida for killing Bhutto, but many Pakistanis suspect her other enemies, perhaps from within shadowy security agencies, were involved. Reuters

Arsonist arrested in Korea

SEOUL—SOUTH KOREAN police said on Tuesday they arrested a man who confessed to burning down a 600-year-old gate designated as the country's No. 1 national treasure because he was angry about a compensation payment.

The 70-year-old arsonist was identified only by his family name Chae, said Inspector Kim Young-soo. Chae was taken into custody late Monday and told police he had planned the arson for several months.

The gate, the oldest wooden structure in Seoul, was one of the few historic structures in the capital to remain standing after the 1950-1953 Korean War. Reuters

ASIA CONSUMER CHOICE No.1

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GOLDILOCKS	SAN MIGUEL
JACK'N JILL	ST LUKES
JOLLIBEE	SHOEMART
LBC	SILVER WORKS
LUCKY ME	SELECTA
MAXX	TANG
MAX'S	WILKINS

The Asian 'Top Brand' Consumers Choice Project

Conducted as a customized research program, it has identified many of the Filipino brands that are the Consumers **No 1** choice of brand in different product categories.

The above brands are all **No 1** choices of the consumers.

To find out more about these rankings and how your brand is rated in a different category. Or, if you are one of the above **No 1** brands and would like more information on the research findings.

Please contact:
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Market research source: Synovate

ZURICH ART THEFT

Masked robbers brandishing handguns stole four paintings by 19th Century masters worth $104 million from a Zurich museum in Switzerland's biggest art theft, police said on Monday

Oil paintings by Cezanne, Degas, Van Gogh and Monet were stolen, in a second dramatic art theft in the area within days

Thieves take $164-M artworks

ZURICH—MASKED ROBBERS BRANDISHING handguns stole four paintings by 19th Century masters worth $164 million from a Zurich museum in Switzerland's biggest art theft, police said on Monday.

Oil paintings by Cezanne, Degas, Van Gogh and Monet were stolen in broad daylight Sunday from the private Buehrle Collection in the second dramatic art theft in the area within days.

"This is the biggest robbery in Switzerland in its art museum and one of the biggest art robberies in Europe," said Peter Reugger, head of investigations for the Zurich police.

"Three men in dark clothing and hoods—one of whom spoke German with a Slavic accent—forced their way into the museum and made off with the paintings in a white car, police said.

A reward of 100,000 Swiss francs was on offer for information leading to their arrest, police added.

Reugger said the Zurich robbery could be compared to the theft of Norwegian artist Edvard Munch's "The Scream" from the Munch Museum in Oslo nearly four years ago. That work was recovered in 2006.

The robbery in Switzerland's financial capital follows the theft of two Picasso paintings—"Tete de Clown" from 1962, and "Nature et Pichet," from 1946—from a nearby cultural center last week.

They said they would investigate whether the two thefts were connected.

The four paintings stolen were Cezanne's "The Boy in Red Vest" from 1890, Degas' "Dressed Lepic" and "Ms Daughters" from 1871, Monet's "Poppies Near Vetheuil" from 1881 and Van Gogh's "Blossoming Chestnut Branches" from 1890, police said. Reuters

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Who else conspired vs Pacquiao?

ANGRY AND SAD. Manny Pacquiao

Former PBA import Wise heads probe

By Inquirer Sports

WHAT WAS INITIALLY PERceived as a simple case of embezzlement involving Manny Pacquiao's dollar account in a Los Angeles bank may lead to a web of fraudulent acts.

The Los Angeles Police Department has reportedly started a deeper inquiry into the loss of about $100,000 (about P7.2 million) from Pacquiao's account in Wells Fargo bank on Sunset Boulevard.

An LAPD source said more people would be questioned about the fraudulent withdrawals.

Pacquiao's dollar deposit dwindled after a series of withdrawals made by "a suspect or suspects" using the Filipino ring superstar's forged signatures.

The developed even as a Inquirer Sports inside revealed that the bank has offered to refund the balance of the amount siphoned off (or $268,000) deposit.

The world's former Fighter of the Year deposited the amount in December 2006.

Tapped to head the investigation by the Anti-Fraud Unit is former cager Fortunato Pilar, a lanky LAPD officer from the Wilshire division.

Wise, a 6-foot-6 240-pound bruiser, is a former All-American and PBA import, having played for U-Tex in 1990-92, Tanduay (1993), Mandie-Ilaw (1995) and Hills Bros/Ilaw (1997).

Arum-san coordinates with Wise

Coordinating with the LAPD probers in behalf of Pacquiao is Comelec Michael Koncz, a Pacquiao adviser and one of Top Rank head Bob Arum's trusted men.

According to reports, only about $3 (9,000 was left of Pacquiao's deposit when the fraudulent withdrawals...made by a woman Pia Quijada, said to be the second wife of Pacquiao's father Joseph Jose—were discovered on Thursday last week.

Pacquiao was "both very angry and sad" when told about the crime, the insider said.

Koncz learned about the withdrawals when Vilma Rodriguez, the assistant vice president of the Wells Fargo branch in Hollywood, asked him whether Pacquiao still remembered that he had an account with the bank.

Pacquiao lost track of account

Apparently, Pacquiao had lost track of the deposit, which he opened in the company of Jose and Quijada using the couple's Los Angeles address.

Pacquiao is training at Freddie Roach's Wild Card Gym in Los Angeles for his March 15 rematch with WBC super featherweight champion Juan Manuel Marquez in Las Vegas.

When the police started their investigation Friday, the source said Quijada begged Engineera from Pacquiao's wife Jinkee, who returned to the country from Los Angeles on Saturday, and confirmed the alleged transactions.

Jose, who met a text message to Pacquiao and made a similar plea.

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Castro takes over as Maroons coach

By Jeannine V. Poyo

HE TOOK THE JOB KNIGHT errand.

But Alroy Castro, the newly appointed coach of the University of the Philippines, hopes to finish what he considers unfinished out of a crew still smoking mad over the heroics in the UAAP men's basketball competition.

The accepting the responsibility of the job offered to four people," said Castro. "I want to focus on the immediate... to bonds the players here to be winners again. If you look at the roster, we have players who were winners back in high school."

Castro, who replaced the busy Joe Lipa, met the Maroons last night after agreeing to come your contract.

And the 36-year-old mentor has decided to spring into the saving mode.

"We're hoping to get players from Manila and the provinces," said Castro.

A tryout has been set every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, starting next week, at Ls.ss. at the UP Gym.

Castro, a 1992 chemical engineering graduate on the Diliman campus, has also mapped out a plan for the squad that had all 14 assignments but you're in an average of 20.8 points.

Castro's appointment ended a three-month search following the dismissal of Lipa and Reynaldo.

But Castro anticipates critics to be taken on his first hand coaching job of his to bring as an assistant to Chot Reyes in the all-pro national men's team.

FVR heads Konica pro-am cast

FORMER PRESIDENT FIDEL V. RAMOS WILL lend a high-powered cast to the Konica Minolta Celebrity Pro-Am on March 6 at The Riviera Luzon in Silang, Cavite.

Ramos has been a consistent patron of lovers of the Asian Tour and PGA Tour Pro-Am since its inception in 2004, through Ci Rio Asia and president Gilbert B. Torres.

"The President has confirmed his participation in early to November set," said Consul. Danny Pastore (ret.), the tournament chair who is vice president of the organizing Federal Golf Association of the Philippines.

Among those expected to join the former President in the presidential flight are NAIAP president and Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza, former president of Jose Rizal University, Tycoon Alfonso Philip, Inc. first vice president Donald M. Edwards Jr.etc.

"Every time we have President Ramos with us, the tournament takes a good mood," said Torres.

The first 110 teams will be given priority with the country's Top 20 teams and allowed to send with amateurs having handicap index of 15 or below.

Realtors, Giants a study in contrast

Purefoods favored over 'Heartbreak Kid'

By Marvey B. Castillo

DON'T THINK FOR A SECOND THAT RE-sonate Sta. Lucia and Purefoods are going to cling it out in the Smart-PBA Philippine Cup Finals. They have a lot to consider on.

Try to, both teams are excellent rookie in all Filipino-ranked.

The Tender Juicy Hotdogs will return to a familiar place on Friday, when they play in an all-Filipino title series for the 13th time—and 20th overall—since joining the league as an expansion team in 1986.

Sta. Lucia, on the other hand, will be playing in their first title series. The Realtors are a newer team—and will be shooting to win this one for the first time in its modern attempt.

That took the Realtors all of 14 seasons to get here, quite a long road traveled compared to that of Purefoods, which made the All-99 game Finals right in its first year with a team built around the likes of Alvin Patrimonio, Jerry Codiñera and Ramon Fernandez.

The stars will match the end of a lot of teammates for the Realtors, who passed up on the chance to form really super teams in the past by trading away such players as Allan Caidic, Bong Hawkins, Bong Alvarez, etc., while trying to keep a "homegrown roster" in an era dominated by foreign-based players.

Team manager Buddy Encarnado had remarked in the past that "Sta. Lucia is not out here to buy a championship," when asked why he traded Caidic and Jose "Sta. Lucia is the only homegrown team in the league because we have no FA-men."

After entering the league in 1993 with a team that had but limped to a conference, the Realtors have gotten really established in this event. Their only title came in 2001, when Dominic Uwenal led them to the Governors Cup shadow.

Sta. Lucia could be considered as the "Heartbreak Kid" of this conference, as it tried all sorts of damage to bag an APC crown, even the trick treats of coaching duo of Tim Cone-Jeffrey Cariaso and Dennis Espino with SEB success.

The team's history of 19 Aces started when it was directed by "Hi-Hawai" Robert Bolick. But it ended to holdout by joining Kelly Williams from the draft list sources and Hydie Reyes from this year's pool of neophytes.

Purefoods, on the other hand, seemed to have found its way to Final after Final of this event with ease. While the Giants own four record championships here, they also have some of the most hurt-breaking defeats.

Through the years, coaches as not look very different from Philippines and Caidiccs, the Giants will continue the same as necessary, thanks to their rich tradition and to the dynamic duo of James Yap and Kerby Raymundo.

KERBY Raymundo (right), one of the reasons for Purefoods' surge this season, will battle the Giants' latest All-Filipino bet against the up-and-coming Sta. Lucia Realtors.

SPORTSWATCH

Mendoza tops Ormoc derby

CLARE THE QUEEN OF HORSEMAN Arthur Mendoza, behind THE other veterans to ride the P5-million Ormoc derby(off-Clark Derby.

Mendoza, owner of Golden Phoenix Guitar Factory in Agoncillo, Batangas, bested rivals Senator Cerveza, a Gonzalez Gilbreth, a joint rider and a pure Gilbreth horse ownership.

Eleven entries included Vida Buena (Ormoc), Century Game Farm (Ormoc Cities), Ormoc Tourist Rep Club (Ormoc), Nature Blade (Gonzalez) jockey and trainer Mendoza.

Proud Mendoza's no-nonsense was accustomed. They were bought by a Malaysian rocker right after the derby.

Bates 5-cocker today

LEADING COCKERELS FROM METRO Manila, Batangas, Laguna and Cavite will clash in more than 40 encounters today in the RLB Valentine's Clash Derby at the Araneta Coliseum.

Popular gamefowl breeders Rolland Bates and Col. Nick Catigbac of Batangas, derby hosts, are backed by selected members from the Pinoy Cockers Association of the Philippines (PCAP), National Cockers Association (NCA) and the Batangas Breeders (CBA) led by Fred Malabanan.

GCAP ok gets going

THE SECOND LEG OF GANCLEBRO COCK-ers Association of the Philippines (GCAP) 3-cock derby series gets under way today at the San Juan Coliseum.

The derby August 40 Birds of Gerry Ramos topped the opening leg conducted earlier, posting four wins and one loss.

Today's GCAP derby promises backed by Sagupan Complainer 2008.

Pasay hosts 128 fights

NAGWAGWAGWAN BIRTHDAY BOXING and weightlift with match coverage at Pasay City Cockpit today for the benefit of 128 Cockers Club. Ruelle Bates, Rudolf Bates, Cock Globe, "Campeñillos stands at 7 a.m. Hours fights and Ata Rodrigo said the winners will get a guaranteed price of P400,000.

A standard price of P130,000 will be won by the 10th Battle-ster champion.

BY TOP CHOICE

NEW BOWLING START

Ex-RP kegler named nat'l mentor

By Mars Anthony Reyes

BOWLING IS CONTESTING GMA Kidol Mike Vergara, who bid for a new medal revolution.

Left in disarray after failing to bag a single victory in the last Asian Games and Southeast Asian Games, the Philippine Bowling Congress ever since the weekend tapped 26-year-old Vergara as the country's primer Men Valderrama to steer its plans for its next international stints.

Already, Valderrama announced the dropping of the national elimination run March 7-11 at the Cervo Valley Lanes in Pasig when 6-6-game, matching reigning world amateur champion Biboy Rivera and former World Cup winner CJ Suarez, are expected to take part.

"Every body must play because we are starting from scratch," said Valderrama, who took a graduate from the Ateneo Law School and has his coaching job at St. Paul to focus on this new task.

Valderrama's plans close a foreign coach will have to work until two months because of a lack of budget.

"We would prefer to get a foreign coach/consultant because of financial constraints, we wanted to hire only two months before a tournament," he said.

He was formally named last Saturday during the PBC meeting and was brought to the PSA Forum at Shaw's UN Avenue yesterday by PBC secretary general Bong Coo.

"The PBC is taking us more than," Coo told the forum, also represented by Rapsa. "We are now going to the grassroots where most divisions think full fans to the national team."

Valderrama, an official of the Tenpin Bowling Association of Makati, said he was given a free hand to choose his coaching staff. He is also set to visit all the tournaments around the country to promote the national eliminations.

He replaced Makoto Asano, Jose Candelaria and Calvo de Leon who all resigned after failing to produce a gold medal during the Thailand SEA Games last December.

Thailand remains team captain Jojo Gatmaitan also retired but was named coach of the national squad.

Denoy wins via technical verdict

DAGUPAN CITY, PANGASINAN—CLEMENT Wilfred Asia Pacific light flyweight champion Aljong Denoy was declared the winner by technical decision over Michael Rodriguez after two rain-stopped six-round bout stories prompted the referee to stop the fight in the sixth round of their 10-round bout Monday night at the Island City Mall outpost here.

Though bloodied, Denoy was way ahead on the scorecards of the three judges when the fight was halted.

In the closed supporting bout, Ricky Jimenez do won by unanimous decision over Reymon Bulos. The judges scored it 59-54, 58-54 and 59-55, all for Jimenez, who also bore Bulos the first time they met by majority decision.

Elmer Mamacongon upset ex-IBF lightweight king Antol Pontes via a technical decision over.

The victory was held as part of the birthday celebration for Mayor Jose Maria Cruz, who is largely credited the boxing's resurgence in this province. Sathya Lagumbay, Gerardo Suarez

'The real conflict in RP billiards'

BARE EYE

Recado Trinidad

WHEN FORMER BILLIYOOL CHAMP Alex Pagulayan wrote a full length letter to defend his stance by the Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines (BSCP) Sun. the Guinness Asian 9-Ball Tour, this statement boomed him by point-ing to the BSCP.

The Pagulayan incident would help fuel to the raining the issues figures on the local billiards front.

On the morning end of Manila lately was the BCSP which has been accused of various violations by a protesting group of top players and their managers.

In the interest of fair play, we hereby host BCSP chair Ala Bhikshu to Please share his letter (shortened to fit column space—Ed)

After PSC chair William Ramirez completely halted the charge of the BMPAP leaders that the PSC gave P10-million and P1.2 million to the BSCP, I talked to the new charge that there is "a conflict of interest" between my being chair of BSCP and being president of Base Sports. The charge is: how to hell in hell and to-day, for the following reasons.

1. The BSCP is a private, voluntary association, registered as a non-stock corporation to promote and develop billiard sports in the Philippines. Its membership comprises billiards stakeholders, such as players, promoters, billiards distributors, managers, referees, coaches, billiard parlor owners, billiard clubs, patrons, and fans.

2. I joined the BSCP in 2000 because of my interest in pool as consumer of its sports promotion services, as a player and also a pro. Mr. Sebastian Chua, the president of Star Paper Corp. and BSCP treasurer, is of a similar situation, he is the distributor of quality billiards equipment and owner of the Space billiard parlor. Other BSCP officers have similar business and professional interests in pool.

The suggestion that to avoid "conflict of interest" a BSCP official must be free of business or professional interest in our sport would negate the very purpose of our organization. It would eliminate the BSCP as the leadership of individuals who can't do anything to help Philippine pool development.

3. The Billiards Congress of America, the governing body for billiards in the United States and the model for BSCP has as officers and members executives representing billiards companies and associations. They all are in a position to affect the future of the sport—they body that sit in the governing body for pool in the US.

Perhaps deposal controls on the quality and significance of the events we organize.

Last year, Roger Wontenberg, for ex-president, was granted sanction and support to organize "The BSCP Billiards Tour"—a 10-event tour to be staged all over the country. For this year, 2007, the BSCP has provisionally sanctioned P50,000 each. The prospects failed because of poor organization and management, team sponsorship and failure to pay prize winners. Here Mariano will has also recommended for the funds of the events.

Base Sports has offered to the BMPAP the management and promotion of the national championships and the world pool championship they just this is to run them-selves.

4. The BSCP is now 22 years old. I joined the association just two years and 10 months ago. For this period, I have observed the association's main activity was selecting players for the Southeast Asian Games and the Asian Games.

The fact that the new BSCP board since 2000 reorganized a more proactive program.

It is the height of absurdity and even treason to suggest impropriety in Base's ability to mobilize persons and public sector support for the staging of the prestigious World Pool Championships in Manila for two years running.

5. There is, of course, a real conflict of interest when player managers become also the organizers of pool tournaments. There is conflict because managers have an interest in their players winning the tournaments so that they can be considered to be respected and fire to all the players in the tournaments, who pay good money to join and also seek to win. The basic principle of fairness is violated because managers naturally favor their players in various ways. Even with this the Instructions to cover formulating to arrangements.

This is the real danger now possibly the plot of BMPAP to organize a professional pool team league. With managers also the promoters, there will be problems of profitability and fairness, to say nothing of possible conflicts.

It must say, nothing in what I do as BSCP chair and as Base president contributes a conflict of interest in any manner. My work as chair has to do strictly with oversight and policy making.

I believe I should do my part in making billiard in the Philippines more competitive and in putting Filipinos pool on the map of the world. I believe I am meeting this responsibility and performing a national service.

Tom Makabenta

Dynamic duo shines anew as Lakers thwart Bobcats

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlantic Division				
Boston	36	14	.720	–
Toronto	30	20	.600	6½
New Jersey	24	26	.480	12½
Philadelphia	21	29	.420	15½
New York	15	34	.306	20½
Southeast Division				
Orlando	32	17	.653	–
Cleveland	31	18	.633	1
Atlanta	28	21	.571	4
Miami	21	28	.429	11
Charlotte	11	38	.224	21½
Central Division				
Chicago	32	17	.653	–
Detroit	31	18	.633	1
Milwaukee	25	24	.510	7½
Indiana	23	25	.479	9

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Northwest Division				
San Antonio	36	13	.735	–
Dallas	31	17	.646	4½
New Orleans	30	19	.612	6
Houston	29	19	.604	6½
Denver	25	23	.521	10½
Pacific Division				
LA Lakers	36	13	.735	–
Portland	32	17	.653	4
Phoenix	31	17	.646	4½
Seattle	15	34	.306	21
Golden State	14	35	.286	22
Pacific Division				
LA Lakers	36	13	.735	–
Portland	32	17	.653	4
Phoenix	31	17	.646	4½
Seattle	15	34	.306	21
Golden State	14	35	.286	22

FOOTBALL STANDINGS

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Team	W	D	L
Arsenal	26	7	3
Aston Villa	24	6	6
Manchester United	23	8	5
Liverpool	22	8	6
Everton	20	9	7
Chelsea	20	8	7
Fulham	19	8	8
Manchester City	18	7	10
Wigan	15	8	12
Stoke	14	8	13
Portsmouth	13	8	13
Hull	13	7	15
Sunderland	12	8	14
Tottenham	12	7	15
West Bromwich Albion	11	8	15
Blackburn	11	7	16
Middlesbrough	10	8	16
Newcastle United	10	7	17
Bolton	9	8	17
Wigan	8	8	18
West Ham	8	7	19
Manchester City	7	8	19
Derby	4	7	23

Thursday's Games: Arsenal 1, Everton 0; Aston Villa 2, Middlesbrough 0; Blackburn 1, Portsmouth 0; Bolton 2, Hull 0; Fulham 2, Wigan 0; Liverpool 2, Newcastle United 0; Manchester City 2, Stoke 0; Sunderland 2, Tottenham 0; West Bromwich Albion 1, West Ham 0.

Sunday's Games: Chelsea 2, Manchester United 0.

Monday's Games: Derby at Portsmouth, 3 p.m.

Tuesday's Games: Middlesbrough at Aston Villa, 3 p.m.; Newcastle United at Bolton, 3 p.m.; Stoke at Blackburn, 3 p.m.; Tottenham at Fulham, 3 p.m.; West Ham at Everton, 3 p.m.; Wigan at Arsenal, 3 p.m.; Hull at Liverpool, 3 p.m.; Manchester United at Sunderland, 3 p.m.; Chelsea at Manchester City, 3 p.m.

Wednesday's Games: West Bromwich Albion at Derby, 3 p.m.

Saturday's Games: Aston Villa at Wigan, 3 p.m.; Blackburn at Hull, 3 p.m.; Bolton at Chelsea, 3 p.m.; Everton at Middlesbrough, 3 p.m.; Fulham at Stoke, 3 p.m.; Liverpool at Tottenham, 3 p.m.; Manchester City at Newcastle United, 3 p.m.; Portsmouth at West Bromwich Albion, 3 p.m.; Sunderland at Arsenal, 3 p.m.; West Ham at Derby, 3 p.m.

Sunday's Games: Manchester United at Portsmouth, 3 p.m

SPORTS

Chot keeps nat'l team coach post

By June Navarro

THE QUESTION ON CHOT REYES' STATUS AS A PHILIPPINE Basketball Association coach was put to rest recently when Talk 'N Text fielded him from a floating status and made him the Phone Pals head coach.

Now, his status as national coach has been reaffirmed as well.

Pia Arumbing Basketball ng Pilipinas (BBP) announced yesterday that it was keeping the firebrand mentor as head coach of the national squad. Although it is sure up to basketball's national federations, the country's first foray into the international men's scene will be handled by a different coach—one with a veteran on his board.

"Chot remains as the national team coach," said BBP executive director Patrick Gregorio during the PBA Press conference.

Gregorio also revealed that he had talked to the PBA board of governors and proposed that the champion of the All-Filipino finals between Purefoods and Sta. Lucia will be sent to Kuwait and carry the national colors in the Pilipinas Championship Cup in May 9-10, to be held in Sarawak.

The men's basketball team made up of PBA stars saw action in the 2007 edition of the Championship Cup held in Iran and finished fourth.

The team used the tournament as preparation for the Fiba-Asia Championships where Reyes and his PBA-backed squad landed ninth and failed to qualify in the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

"I'm waiting for the decision of the PBA," said Gregorio.

After the Fiba-Asia Championship, Gregorio said the PBA could also field a squad to the Jones Cup in Taipei.

Once he secures the pledge of the PBA, Gregorio said the national team would immediately resume practice sessions for the two upcoming tournaments.

"It will jumpstart the national training program for the elite team and it will continue until the SEAG hosts Games and Fiba Asia Championships on the same year for the world championships," added Gregorio.

Reyes was a head coach of San Miguel Beer Magnolia before his stint as coach of the national team.

He was signed by Talk 'N Text to replace Derrick Pumaren after the Phone Pals were eliminated from the Philippine Cup.

CHOT Reyes (left) will be handling two squads.

Perpetual trophy for PSA honorees

FOR THE FIRST TIME in its 58-year history, the Philippine Sportswriters Association (PSA) is adopting a perpetual trophy to be handed out to all the honorees in the 2008 PSA Annual Awards Night slated December at the SM Mall of Asia.

Designed by renowned craftsman Gerald Raymundo of Raymundo Awards, the trophy shows a golden athlete's leg on standing on rock.

The athlete's figure was adopted from the circa 1949 PSA logo. It depicts an ancient discus thrower about to hurl a rock, evoking the PSA's reputation as keeper of records and sports history.

"We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Gerald Raymundo of Raymundo Awards for crafting the PSA's perpetual trophy as approved by the [association's] board during its last meeting," said PSA president Aldin Cardenas of the Tribune.

Raymundo's Awards also provides trophies in various awarding bodies such as the Philippine Basketball Association.

Officials of the 10 awardees Nonito Donaire Jr. and Miguel Molino head the 87 honorees who will receive the new trophies in the event that starts at 5:30 p.m.

The board also announced yesterday the cost of this year's fete.

Ballroom Pinoy champ Mona Orosa-Jamin joins golfer Frankie Minoza, billiards idol Bonnie Alonzo, comedienne Mosang Sr., pugilist Mark Magsayo, amateur pugilist Jason Cuntay, jockey Pats Dilosa and the owner of champion horse Da Yoomsy Go as recipients of the PSA Major Awards.

Senator President Manny Villar will be the guest speaker during the awards proceedings to be hosted by Mare Hicon and Patricia Bermudez-Hizon.

Manganti, Duay harvest Mango Tee plum anew

COLLEGE CLASSMATES ABOEL MANGANTI and Arnold Duay scored a sensational victory that made them only the second team to repeat as champions in the 29th Milo-sponsored grand tournament of the Alabang Country Club recently.

Down by 13 points after the first round and with so many teams in contention going into the final day of play, Manganti and Duay played without pressure the rest of the way.

"We felt we already had our time last year and whatever happened with our round, we certainly enjoyed our reign," said Manganti.

Lady luck smiled on them again as Manganti and Duay rallied with an 69 points to emerge overall winners of the tournament presented by Filipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. and Smart Infinity with excellent feat.

Manganti and Duay won by four points over Alabang president Ani Tallodoro and guest partner Am Bag who turned in 76-to-a 200 and ended up topping Class B over Jess Agoncillo-Jose duo (ace 76-70).

DR Aquino and former national shotgun Francis Guanio, with the best after a fine first-round effort, yielded the overall light ruely lost contact to runaway in the group won partner with their 74-63-137, 6 points up on the Sunny Mansion JP Reyes combine.

Class A went to Danny Villanueva-Benito Ochoa (78-76-154) who finished seven up on Rabbit Garcia-Bilardo Au Bay Villareal-Ernesto Bunsay (77-76-153) and Miss Filipet-Dennis Poque (87-67-154) were the top players in Class C while Sister Quiroz-Vitas Infante (81-78-159) topped Class D.

Gene gross winners per class were also honored with Manuelon Reyes ruling Class A, Joseph Ondoval-Joseph Tanchoncing topping Class B, Pol dela Cruz-Mother Villanueva winning Class C and Eusog Ignacio-Jeanne Ibanez prevailing in Class D.

MOTORING

Text us your feedback

Editor Cesar D. Maiquez

Pinoys still love commercial vehicles more than cars

By Tonyo R. Salazar

PASSENGER CARS STILL take the backseat when it comes to Filipino motorists' choice of vehicles.

Although passenger car sales showed almost a 20 percent improvement in January compared to the same period last year, total commercial vehicles grew 32 percent for the same period, overall sales of commercial vehicles continue to dominate overall market sales each an almost 70 percent market share.

Carmakers are also trend to continue for the year, as revealed to a statement by Elizabeth Lee, president of the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc (Campi).

Largest category

The sales trend was shown in the January 2008 auto industry vehicles sales released to the press by the Campi Feb. 6.

The commercial vehicle segment is the largest category in the market. New models introduced last year boosted sales by January with total first month sale of 5,866 units. Campi forward strong sales in this segment to continue in the coming months.

Commercial vehicles include multipurpose vehicles such as AUVs (Asian utility vehicles), pickups, vans, compact wagons or compact sport utility vehicles (SUVs) and full-sized SUVs.

Lee said that opens is a good considerations for buyers as well.

"Price buyers are smart and well informed and would make the best purchase choices based on value for money and utility in exchange for their hard earned money," Lee said in a phone interview.

Of the CVs, Lee cited SUVs, pickups, vans and compact wagons as the most popular. She said that growth of the sales rests on the back of these popular vehicles.

Campi also cited sales of LCVs (light commercial vehicles) of which pickups, vans, compact and full-sized SUVs belong to, showed an overall growth of 19 percent compared to the same period last year sustained by the influx of new models.

Most popular vehicles

CVs are the most popular vehicles both due to their inherent versatility and utility. You can use them both for business and personal use. It answers purchase requirements of most buyers regarding value for money for dual or multipurpose use.

This is validated by the sales figures and growth figures especially for the light commercial vehicle segment which comprise of pickups, vans and car wagons.

Preferred by big families

Toyota Philippines' public relations officer Elijah Marcial told the Inquirer that the car manufacturer's bulk of commercial vehicle sales have come from multipurpose vehicles at 62 percent.

Marcial surmised that because CVs are bigger, have more capacity and are multipurpose and with more affordable features, it may seem that multipurpose vehicles (MPVs), which are part of CVs, are preferred particularly by big Filipino families. CVs, she said, could also be used for business.

Atlas Bravo, assistant advertising and promotions manager of Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corp., said SUVs, which are part of commercial vehicles, are patronized because of their "pormal" (status) symbol while the rest of the CVs are purely for commercial business use.

"Cars are more for personal use while SUVs are more for status symbol," Bravo says.

Another trend that been observed although overall sales from December 2007 to January 2008 registered a decline overall, this was expected due to the buying "cycle," wherein December traditionally registered the highest sales.

A good sign

Lee said the auto industry started this year with a 17 percent increase in January compared to the same period last year.

The industry sold a total of 9,868 units in January, which she said is "a good sign for the rest of the year."

Passenger car sales increased by 19.5 percent for January compared to the same period last year.

"The robust growth for the passenger car market is seen to continue in the coming months. The new models introduced last year are seeing many positive results translated to sales in the first month of the year," Lee said.

Alfa Romeo out to win younger men's hearts

MILAN—FIT THE ALFA ROMEO 2008 pin to many as an icon of Italian style and speed. Its sales are mediocre, it struggles to record a one percent market share in its main European market, and it is losing money.

Even though it has had the culture of motor-racing coursing through its veins and pistons since its inception nearly a century ago, years of poor quality parts and service have deprived it of the premium status enjoyed by Volkswagen's Audi and BMW.

"While it tries to pitch itself as a premium brand, it doesn't quite make it," said Jonathan Painter, an analyst at J.D. Power.

When the Fiat group, best known as a maker of cheap, small cars, bought Alfa in 1986, its factories were empty of ideas, with no investment in technology or product development.

Sergio Marchionne, Fiat's chief executive, last year told analysts Alfa "is the hardest asset that we have that we have to work (on)," from rising to this challenge is Lancia Mr Marchionne 40, the longest standing within the Fiat industrial group—who brings a badge of success from overseeing the recovery of the Fiat brand.

Dr Mon's thick hair and moustache make him just the sort of he more comfortable riding a motorcycle than driving a convertible, but success for Alfa will depend on him rejuvenating the brand magic of the 1950s and 1960s for a younger generation.

Enzo Ferrari used to race Alfa Romeos before he started up his own company, Alfa won the first Formula One World Championship in 1950, and in its 1960s bowing out Elijah Marcial told the Inquirer that the car manufacturer's bulk of commercial vehicle sales have come from multipurpose vehicles at 62 percent.

Marcial surmised that because CVs are bigger, have more capacity and are multipurpose and with more affordable features, it may seem that multipurpose vehicles (MPVs), which are part of CVs, are preferred particularly by big Filipino families. CVs, she said, could also be used for business.

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TRANSPORT TRIVIA

By Emmon Cruz

Motor oil

MOBIL engine oil

YOU ASK, "WHY USE MOTOR OIL in engines of?"

Would-be motorists who know by heart their car care lessons should tell you that motor oil, also called engine oil, is the lifeblood of the engine. It is created from any other fluid, gas and matter, because it could reduce engine damage if contaminated.

It is the primary job of the engine oil to keep all the metal surfaces in the engine from grinding together and tearing themselves apart from become while transferring heat away from the combustion cycle.

Research shows that engine oil also holds all the nasty by-products of combustion, such as silicon oxide and soils in suspension. It cleans the engine of these chemicals and buildups, and keeps the moving parts coated in oil. Reports also show that the engine oil maintains the exposure to oxygen.

Figure this out: Lubricating oil makes a separating film between surfaces of parts moving next to each other so as to minimize direct contact between them decreasing friction, wear and production of excessive heat, thus protecting the engine. It also carries away heat from moving parts, which is important because automatic

tend to become softer and less dissociation resistant at high temperature.

Synthetic motor oil, consisting of artificially synthesized compounds, normally has a viscosity index that is higher than that of conventional motor oils. Its molecules are more uniform in size and less likely to disassociate at high temperature. Synthetic motor oil is also more resistant to oxidation because while more expensive, it offers enhanced performances. Some engines have an additional cooler.

Popular major producers of motor oils in the world include the Irving, Aminol, Castrol, Exxon, Pacific Mobil, Shinei, NKO, Pennzoil, Shell, Total S.A., Valvoline and Unil.

The only difference between these competing brands of motor oil, they say, is mainly additives. Remember that any oil of the proper viscosity conforming to the American Petroleum Institute (API) rating should be safe to use. Straight weight or monograde oils in late model engines is not recommended.

References: http://autorepair.about.com, http://www.carbibles.com, http://www.edmunds.com

Mitsubishi Strada captures 52.1% market share in 2007

STRADA 2008

SALES OF THE MITSUBISHI OF THE Mitsubishi Strada 4x4 during 2007 reached 1,816 units edging out its nearest rival, the Toyota 96-Lux, by 797 units. This ranked Mitsubishi as the best Philippine car to capture 52.1 percent market share of the total 3,678 4x4 pickups sold last year.

In a statement made by Ferdinand Santiquia, MMPC's AVP for Marketing Services, "We are confident that the buyers of our Strada are now satisfied with its looks, features and ride comfort. That's why an increasing number of people are convinced to get one for themselves. For 2008, aside from maintaining market leadership in this 4x4 category, we are looking forward to an upward trend in our sales, especially with the introduction of two new models this year."

The Strada 4x4 is available in three variants: the 2.5 GLS Sport Automatic, 2.5 GLS 4x4 Manual, and the 2.5 GLS Manual. 2.5-liter models have the 4M40 engine that produces 136 PS at 3,800 rpm and 343 Nm of torque at 2,000 rpm. While the 2.5 liter 4D56 engine variants 136 PS at 3,800 rpm and maximum torque is 314 Nm at 2,000 rpm. Both feature a DOHC 16-valve cylinder head, direct injection diesel with fuzzy commonrail and a high-response turbocharger with four-mount intercooler.

Recently introduced late last year was the Strada GL and the Strada GLS 4x2. These two refined-looker Strada round high like its 4-door sister sibling and is also equipped with the 2.5 4D56 Intl engine. The same spacious cabin is equipped with power windows, central locking, high control instrument cluster, CD player with FM/AM tuner, and high grade sport-type fabric seats to name a few. Major differences of the Strada GLS 4x2 over the GL 4x2 are dual SRS airbags, aluminum alloy wheels fitted with 205/60 R 16 tires, fog lamps, chrome side mirrors and door handles.

Strada are sold in all Mitsubishi dealers nationwide with the following suggested retail prices: Strada 2.5 GL 4x2 M/T, P815,000; Strada 2.5 GLS 4x2 M/T, P880,000; Strada 2.5 GLS 4x2 A/T, P930,000; Strada 2.5 GLS Sport 4x4 M/T, P1,110,000; Strada 2.5 GLS Sport 4x4 M/T, P1,128,000; and Strada 2.5 GLS Sport 4x4 A/T, P1,168,000.

Colors available are deep black mica, cool silver, fairy white, titanium gray mica, majestic red and medium blue mica.

The Strada comes with a 3-year warranty or 100,000 kilometers, whichever comes first.

MOTORSCOPE

Record-breaking fuel economy drive

THE RECORD HAS BEEN BROKEN, AGAIN! Clark Philippines Inc. (MOPS) together with its dealership network motorcycle Petron Corp. is crafting another milestone in this year's Petron Xtra Mile Challenge (Dumaguete Edition).

Team Zapex Harmonex set a new record by reaching 1,402.4 kilometers on one full tank. The winning team—Emilio Arellano (national Zapex rider from Pagadipad in Cavayan and turned back to Tuguegarao, Cagayan) but using a 1.5-liter Honda Jazz with Continuous Variable Transmission (CVT), the official automobile of the competition. Winning this regular motorcycle edition in 2006, the Ilocos brothers Arellano has doubled the mileage up to the plate and surpassed its own recorded 1,400 km.

"Any form of savings is highly essential especially in times of fuel crisis," Aniel Dizon, MCPI's VP for Marketing, said. "So is becoming conscientious like this contest encouraged motorists to be aware on how to maximize mileage in every litre of fuel," he added.

Driver techniques can be applied to optimizing fuel mileage but the numerous results of all 8 tables drove in three fundamental: vehicle, fuel and driver.

The main technical tool secrets of the 1.5-liter Jazz makes it the perfect vehicle for the competition. As defined in the innovative 1.5-liter, 4-cylinder i-DSI (Intelligent Dual and Sequential Ignition) engine that boasts of remarkable features: Start/Stop-ECO entry by using this capable plug-per-cylinder and by varying ignition timing according to driving conditions. Its 7-speed CVT and compact, lightweight engine design also add up in bringing extra mileage. It's the same powerplant that is used in the Honda City 1.5-liter models.

Being the right type of fuel is also significant factor in reaching the extra mile. Petron XTRA blended gasoline has a special formulation that contains detergent additive for an excellent engine cleaning effect and contains catalyst to combust the fuel for more efficient combustion.

Lastly, it's the driver having full control over the machine who matters. One has to have proper driving skills and understanding of the vehicle. High revolutions equate to gas, anticipation of traffic patterns with minimum accident-taking and acceleration.

Finishing at second place was the Philippine Star team composed of the senior account manager Jeff Reyes and following contributor Lester Dizon, registering a distance of 1,203.5 km. Coming in at third first place with 1,138.3 km was the Rizal Brother team of Ronnie Flowers and Carlito Pinero, another Honda Jazz entry of Philippine Star and Manila Bulletin, respectively.

TEAM Zapex Harmonex and the 1.5 Honda Jazz

New Jaguar XF wins 'Car of the Year' award

JAGUAR'S NEW XF HAS GARNERED TOP honor—the highly coveted "Car of the Year" award—at the 2008 What Car? Awards in London. The XF also took top place in the "Best Executive Car" category ahead of the BMW 5 Series and the Mercedes E-Class.

Steve Fowler, group editor of What Car?, said: "For us, the G goes straight to them with the very best cars from Japan's best and given that the car market today is more competitive than it's ever been, it's fair to say the XF is the best car Jaguar has ever built.

"The XF really does have it all—a sensational interior and dramatic interior combined with a drive that will delight and engage in equal measure. On top of that, it stacks up as a sensible buying and owning proposition, too."

Mike O'Donnell, managing director of Jaguar Cars, said: "All of us at Jaguar are delighted that we've taken the top spot of these awards, and that What Car? has named the new XF Car of The Year. It's especially gratifying as What Car? has such a great reputation for representing the British consumer. Jaguar is creating a new generation of cars that sits well with the XK, and more symbiosis with the all-new XF—we have done. New-generation car that has the heart of a sports car and the soul of a sports saloon. Like the XK, XF is visually striking and thrilling to drive.

XF has already received a host of top-rated awards including 'Car of the Year' from The Sun newspaper, 'Luxury Car of the Year' from Top Gear magazine, 'Interior of the Year' from CAR magazine and the 'Design Award' from Autocar magazine.

The XF comes with generous specification, featuring a host of innovations including touch-screen infotainment system, Bluetooth connectivity, steering wheel controls, voice control for mobile phone and satellite navigation, and the optional top-of-the-range METAIDA Bowers & Wilkins speaker system, delivering a powerful and crystal-pure formance.

JAGUAR XF

Available to order now, the XF made its public debut at the Frankfurt International Motor Show in September and the first customer deliveries began in March.

Visit the all-new Jaguar showrooms at the GT Ecco Building, 388 Ecco Ave. Makati.

Volvo C30 most attractive design of all

2007 EUROPEAN CAR DESIGN OUT OF 10 all production models. That's what the panel judging the Czech Autodesign Awards 2007 now beheld about the Volvo C30.

Autodesign is Styling Magazine in the Czech Republic with a regular readership 24 people—journalists and designers (both general and automotive)—to choose the most outstanding contemporary automotive designs of all, in production cars and concepts too.

The C30 gained the highest marks in the prestigious car category >40 points, ahead of the Fiat 500 (40) and the Maserati Gran Turismo (36). Among models of the concepts was the Mazda Taiki Concept (35 points), followed by the Citroën C-Cactus (33), the Skoda 33 Amnigo (30).

In the case of the C30, the panel was impressed by the way Volvo has managed to integrate elements not really found in much bigger cars, and has paid homage to the brand's history while producing a remarkably modern design in its own right.

Goldfields, Hilltop Cars Inc. is the official distributor of Volvo cars. The Volvo Makati office, showroom and After-Sales Service Center are located at 2272 Chino Roces Ave., Makati City. Volvo Cebu is located on A.S. Fortuna Street, Banilad, Mandaue City.

The 2008 Volvo automobile line includes the sizable C30 Sport Coupé, the versatile All-New V70 Touge Convertible, the compact All-New S40 and V50 Sportwagon, the sporty S60, the flagship all-new S80 luxury sedan, the rugged XC70 Cross Country and the award-winning XC90 SUV.

Alfa Romeo out to win . . .

From page B3-1

monitoring survey have already helped turn Fiat into a serious competitor to European carmakers, with models like the Panda city car and the Grande Punto hatchback.

The latest model, the Cinquecento, which rated "Car of the Year" by Europe's automotive journalists and has been getting so many orders that Fiat has had to step up production.

Pushing toward a set of ambitious targets for 2010, Dr Marchionne's efforts helped the broader group confound sceptics with a return to profit after coming close to bankruptcy four years ago.

Last year Fiat, which also makes trucks, tractors and CNH tractors, turned out record trading profit of $ 2.2 billion on sales 13 percent higher sales. In contrast, which includes the Alfa, Fiat and Lancia brands, more than doubled its trading profit to 605 million euros.

Alfa Junior

Of Fiat's three car brands, analysts say Alfa has the greatest potential to generate higher profit margins.

"It is the one that—if it is successful—[is] probably going to give us the biggest benefit from a margin standpoint," Marchionne told the analysts on last year's call.

JP Morgan's Hindson said in note he saw could increase by 3-5 percent, although lifting them to 6.8 percent—the level of profitability enjoyed by rival at BMW—would be a still challenge.

While Fiat had a success of models and a market rebuilding in Latin America, Dr Marchionne has room to manoeuvre with Alfa: it has fewer new models in the works and their market is mostly limited to Europe.

So, much is hinging on the autumn launch of the Junior, a new model compact car, hinting at a younger driver than the brand is currently attracting, it will be a big step for Alfa.

If it proves to be a hit, the Junior and the upcoming 149 sedan could make up nearly half of Alfa's sales volume, according to Morgan Stanley analyst Adam Jonas.

"The 149 and the Junior have got to be hits," he said.

"They've got to get volumes going." It will not be easy: some reports suggest doubt Alfa will be able to meet its own sales target of 300,000 for 2010, let alone break even in 2008. They suspect a planned return to the United States has been postponed by a year to 2010.

But Alfa is making limited progress. Dr Marchionne, Fiat's chief executive, forecasts Bavarian, will have focusing on two key markets where he wanted to relaunch the brand: the United Kingdom and the north.

The results of his efforts are starting to show, with British sales rising.

"I think they'll get there," said James Wheeler, who sells second-hand Alfa Romeos in Britain.

Reuters

Stuck in a moment

MY DRIFT

Andre Dahlen

THE NEW TOYOTA COROLLA IS OUT. Much awaited by the public and the rest of the industry, it is rather curious that a product of this importance hasn't broken cover with the fanfare and hot expected of such an established model. Roughly 30 million Corollas in 10 iterations, sold over 42 years is a lot to shout about. The relative silence over the tenth-generation hatch styl so much.

That is a car that will definitely find itself in the garages of many Filipino families. There are those out there who will buy a Toyota Corolla, right-answer, just on blind brand loyalty. We cannot really fault those faithful, over the years several of the past versions of this car have really been reliable, value for money automobiles. Two models—the BZTs series and the AEAs series, both of the '90s—were actually fun to drive. Add to that the interpretive nature of Corolla parts and you can see why many are still hooked.

Quick read

Pending a test drive of the 10th-Generation Corolla, a definitive verdict cannot be laid down. Although, a quick read of the specification sheet will show that very little has environmentally changed from the previous 2004 car model.

Engines in the range are 1.8-liter and 1.6-liter VVT-i units similar to the Corolla it is replacing. Declared power outputs are down but this isn't necessarily a bad thing. A top of the line 1.8-liter version will come with 132 Hp and 170 Nm of torque while the run of the mill 1.6-liter delivers 100 bhp and a 145 Nm torque figure. It looks like the new Corolla is turning toward a more fuel-efficient, economical tool.

Transmission choices are the usual: a 4-speed automatic and a 5-speed manual; the bigger engine again only coming in a sheik box. Suspensions don't change dramatically either with independent front and rear systems but designs will be key specified.

Additional curb weight can be found on the new Corolla and good money says this extra heft went into further insulating the passenger cabin from the road. It seems that the factors that make up this Corolla point in an obvious general direction. This isn't going to be a pocket rocket by any stretch of the imagination.

Why hasn't Toyota stepped into the compact sedan ring with a more potent, more-assertive product then? With a fresh, revised, and Core chassis in the market and an engine lineup Lancer soon (almost), why has Toyota seemingly dropped the ball? There is an answer.

Hedging its bets elsewhere

The turbulent executives of the iconic Corolla model is due to the fact that it does not play a large part in the Toyota plan for a worldwide mid-sedan domination assurance. If recent while other manufacturers still decide to pour resources into the compact sedan segment, Toyota is hedging its bets elsewhere. In the Philippine market, the Vios subcompact and the interior AUV represent the leading edge. In more-advanced and markets, hybrids and diesel compact two-box designs carry the flight.

In the end, the world's veteran leading compact sedan has to deal with the realities of a maturing market. In fact, a few Tokyo Motor shows ago, possible benchmarks against and competing manufacturers were wondering if there was actually going to be a 11th Generation Corolla.

The loss of a compact sedan in the Toyota lineup was nothing to panic about in their minds. Toyota's inevitable rise to one day become the world's largest vehicle manufacturer was not hinged on this model. Things got so quiet that a few media outlets actually guessed rumpers of this model and spoke loudly of the product's landmark run.

Toyota has proven all of us who wrote off this one so wrong. They will control the segment with a car that they believe is sufficient to the needs of those who are looking for no-crazy-level family sedan. Arguing the point with them will be futile anyway.

Some of what's been written in this column today is going to dismiss the icon once. Filipino motorist been buying new Corollas, even if there are better dd-ings of no-backgrindly superior competing products out in the market as we speak for less money. The Corolla's brand strength is such, that regardless of fault, this car will sell.

AUGHT seats

DASHBOARD and instrument panel

THE AZERA'S 3.3-liter V6 DOHC 24-valve Lambda engine

RIANA SEAT passengers have their own aircon controls, cupholders, armrest and 2 headrests.

THE CLASSY cockpit with elegant leather and wood grain inserts

Azera: Hyundai's luxury flagship

BEFORE SYSTEMS MOTOR UNVEILED the Genesis in Seoul last month, its big luxury car was the Azera. And since Hyundai Asia Resources Inc. (Hari) has no apparent plans to bring the Genesis to Manila this year, the Azera is still the premium flagship of South Korea's largest car manufacturer (with a country-credit) global marketing strategy used by Japanese car manufacturers over the past three decades is being copied by Hyundai and its affiliate Kia: secure a solid brand-blend in one car segment and then branch out from there to target increasingly upscale customers.

Improved quality

After a poor start in North America in the 1970s with cheap, sloppily built small cars, Hyundai got its act together and began to improve quality control. Now Hyundai is building cars, SUVs and minivans that are as reliable and deliver as the best that Japan offers—and selling them for much less. Increased sales worldwide and high-quality cachet have been reported automotive scoring

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

institutions such as J.D. Power and the United States' National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) must have given Hyundai the confidence to enter the highly competitive arena of luxury cars now dominated by the Europeans.

Positioned

While the rear-wheel drive Genesis was developed over the past four years to compete with the likes of the Mercedes-Benz E-Class, the BMW 5 Series and the Lexus GS, the front-wheel drive Azera was designed to grab market share from the Honda Accord, Nissan Altima and Toyota Avalon in the International North American midsize sedan segment. Since the Altima and Avalon are not sold here, the Azera is positioned to go with the heated 3.0-liter V6, the Toyota Camry V6 3.0 and the Nissan Teana 3.5-liter V6. The updated 2007 Accord's edge over its rivals is that at P1,750,000, it costs less (except for the current Accord V6, which will be replaced by an all-new, probably more expensive 2008 model this year) but offers equivalent if not more room and power, a quiet, comfy ride, a plush cabin and an array of standard safety features and amenities.

THE AZERA, Hyundai's premium top-of-the-line luxury sedan

Potent V6

In other markets, the Azera is powered by either one-of-two DOHC V6 engines with Continuously Variable Valve Timing (Continuously Variable Valve Timing (CVVT): a 3.8-liter or a 3.3-liter mated to a 6-speed automatic transmission (A/T). Only the 3.3 V6 is available here, but it is a potent engine: just the cusp, smoothly delivering 234 hp@6,000 rpm and 226 lb-ft@5,500 rpm (net torque).

With 4 V6 engine supplying torque-grunt and a smooth-shifting gate-type A/T in a solid body structure, the Azera is a pleasure to drive or ride. The double wishbone front suspension and multilink arrangement at the rear each have an antiroll stabilizer bar and gas shock absorbers with twin tube to provide an ultra-comfortable ride without compromising handling. The Azera corners with decent grip and modest body roll and front-end plowing; the steering is positive but light. The disc brakes on all four 17 inch alloy wheels are strong, supplemented by 7- post-caliper brakes with pad wear warning device here and an plus a parking brake system at the rear.

Richly appointed

The cabin is richly appointed with leather seats, dove wins and remote horn; a leather-wrapped, electric tilt/telescopic steering wheel with wood grain inserts and audio control buttons; a power sunroof; 14-way power driver's seat with integrated Memory System and 8-way power front passenger seat; electric folding, electric heated outside rearview mirrors; dual zone climate controls; air quality control system and air filter; outside temperature gauge; a 3-DIN AM/FM, 6-in-dash CD changer, MP3 with Infinity 8 speaker system and 8-inch subwoofer.

Head and leg room are ample in front and at the back despite the supportive, high-set seats which, combined with the low, stylish dashboard and large windows, provide excellent all-around visibility. Passengers occupying the 60/40 split-folding rear seat have their own aircon controls, center armrest and cupholders.

Full safety

Peace of mind while driving is guaranteed by a full suite of safety features including eight airbags, ABS with EBD and Brake Assist, Electronic Stability Program, traction control, pretensioner seatbelts with energetic locking retractors, keyless entry with burglar alarm, tripset-mixing door unlock, rain-sensing wipers and a trunk emergency escape system. The headlamps are projector-type HID with leveling device and fog lamps are standard.

Summing up, the impressively built and outfitted Azera with its overall refinement, dynamic but smooth performance, decent handling, safety features, plush ride quality and comparatively low price make it an excellent choice.

2bU to be you to be you to be you

LIFESTYLE

Editor Cheche Barrad-Formoso

Chief of Correspondents Pam Pitxer

2bU! Valentine blowout

CELLING THE DRAMA.
Stay in touch with your loved ones with Nokia's newest offerings—the N82, which will allow you to shoot up to 200 pictures and up to 112 minutes worth of video footage; Nokia N95 8GB, which is practically a computer in your pocket; N91, which is loaded with mobile entertainment; two Nokia 6500 Slides, which can connect directly to iPods; Nokia 6500 Classic, which has 11 MB of storage, Wi-Fi and GPS Express Music, which you music fan will love; and Nokia 6300, which is equipped with a 2-megapixel camera with its digital zoom, screen player, FM stereo radio, video player and up to 1 GB expandable memory. To make your Valentine's day extra sweet, Nokia is giving away a red Nokia 6500 Classic worth Php 20,000 each!

The best thing about this gift guide? A lucky reader will win all these prizes

By Mary Bianca Consuji, Harold Jason Dupilas and Pamela Angela Prater
2bU! Correspondents

FOR YEARS, WE'VE BEEN helping you spot gifts for your loved ones—for Christmas, for graduation season, for Valentine's day. This year won't be different—except that this time, we won't just tell you what to buy; we'll actually give them all away.

One lucky reader will win all the prizes on these pages. It doesn't matter if you're single or attached and if you want to win the prizes for your boyfriend, girlfriend, friends or family.

Just tell us who you will share these gifts with and why. Be as creative as you can. E-mail your entries to 2bu@inquirer.com.ph and list of entries is Feb. 20, 12 noon.

TOTAL PROTECTION
When you love someone, you'll want to protect every part of him or her—even the eyes. Rudy Project offers super-lightweight, versatile, high-performance sunglasses that blend cutting-edge ergonomic features with advanced materials for ultimate protection. Visit Rudy Project at SM Megamall, Ayala Center Cebu, Robinsons Galleria, Glorietta 3, Power Plant Mall, Alabang Town Center, Trinoma, Cebu Ever Gotesco, Ayala Malls Manila Bay and Festival Supermall. Visit www.rudyproject.com.ph. Win a pair of Rudy Project sunglasses from Rudy Project!

STAR IN YOUR OWN FILM
The Kodak M892, a 7-megapixel camera with VGA movie mode capability, boasts amazing home video quality output—perfect for that profession of undying love to Orlando Bloom you always had. But you've been planning to upload on YouTube. After this cannot-miss, post-video moment, your fantasy might come true.

STEP INTO ROMANCE.
Rendezvous seeks you to look up with your sweetheart and step into epic times. Fall in love with the adorable designs from Ito Kotsubo. Lovers love Viel Royal Dentro at SM Mall of Asia and S Maeda. Star lucky 2bU! reader will win one pair of shoes from Royal Dentro.

THE MORE, THE MERRIER
Singleness shouldn't come out on the 14th! Swap woes in Enchanted Kingdom with your friends on Feb. 16 and pretend to be heads of DJ Royal Amateur soldier's Tent at 6 p.m. Winner gets 10 tickets and ancient secrets to make an engagement to a big one.

CHOCOLATE OVERDOSE
It doesn't get wrong with chocolates. They're so yummy! Pilsbury Candy Corner will begin by giving two boxes of Cavatina net today 2bU! reader.

DO THIS AFTER DINNER

Define the first few stages of dating? There's nothing like a warm mug of coffee to cap a romantic evening. This month, Starbucks is featuring the espresso-based caramel Macchiato, a luxury concoction drizzled with caramel. Warmly enchanting—as Valentine's Day should be. Who isn't Starbucks Valentine Days, containing tumblers, tea lattes, and coffee grams and more.

SWIMS-WEAR IT

Tribe is one of our most successful shopping solutions. Their stores colorful shelves are stocked with fashion goodies that are ready to be hooked out. As a special Valentine's day treat, Tribe is giving away Grey Doll for the ladies and Boxer Briefs for men with every P1,000 single receipt purchase until Feb. 17. Tribe stores are at G/F, Power Plant Mall, Rockwell Drive, Makati. Tribe is giving away 10 gift packs in one lucky SMS! inside.

SWEET AND SARCASTIC

Enjoy Ain't Your Thing, check out David & Goliath's Valentine's wares. Extra heartbreak and crapfestion is good luck by giving out shirts and accessories that have statements like "I'm over it," "Blow me ego," "Love 4 Sale" (it's only date rejections" printed on them. David & Goliath stores are at Boutique High Street, Power Plant Mall, Trillanes, Robinsons Place Manila-Metroson, Newport's and Festival's Station. David & Goliath will be giving away the goodies shown on this page.

LONG-DISTANCE LOVE

Valentine's make long distance love a little easier. Check out these two models from Datex. The DLV 4000 comes with 3.0MP digital photos, mp3 to good sound and USB 2.0 connection will set you back P1,000. It's focus range is from 3cm to infinity and can produce 1.3-megapixel still images. The DSV-5000, P999, comes with a USB 1.1 connector, built-in microphone and can produce 1.3-megapixel still images. The Datex webcam are available at leading computer stores nationwide. Call 730.1188. Competitors giving away two webcams to a lucky SMS! inside.

IT'S IN THE BAG

Wallets and flip flops aren't the only beach accessories you need to think about. Colorful bags will save you that extra attention. Kimba's Dakine bags will surely take care of that for you. And guess what, the women gets more than one Dakine bag!

Beauty overload

YOUR VALENTINE'S DAY date is not like any other date. While you don't have to spend the entire day in the salon having your hair curled or your nails done, a fresh scent or a luxurious body lotion can do wonders for your self-esteem (and how you feel) on your date. Check out these romantic mood-setters from Rustan's Department Store, and start preparing for that long-awaited date.

CLINIQUE HAPPY HEART SET

Dead beat this whole day with the Clinique Happy Heart set. With cute boxes and sparkling notes, this scent will surely get anyone's attention. The Happy Heart set contains a 50-ml perfume spray, 75-ml body cream, and a perfume roller ball and lip gloss and that you can refill using tinted pens.

BADGER LOKTA BOX SLEEP KIT

Deep every after a good date with the Badger Calm Sleep Kit. It contains the star product—the Lavender Sleep Balm—a Bedtime Soak Bar, Sleep Enhancer Massage Oil, and Lavender and Orange Lip Balm. You can easily dip into sweet dreams right after.

ACCA KAPPA CALYCANTHUS SET

Celebrate the season for a seriously romantic date with the Acca Kappa Calycanthus set, the floral notes of which will make you feel feminine and frill balloon. The set contains a bottle of Calycanthus EDT and a scented candle.

L'OCCITANE HONEY AND LEMON EAU DE TOILETTE

Even boys would love to wear this scent. The L'Occitane honey and lemon cologne sounds like something you'd put on raw to add flavor, but the irresistible sweet-and-tart combination of the perfume is hard to resist.

L'ARTISAN PARFUMEUR PIMENT BRULANT EAU DE TOILETTE

Describe a mysterious mood with Pimenti Brulant cologne by L'Artisan. Its smoky, woody notes appeal to a generally mature audience, but for nights when you want to feel grown up, this is the perfume to inspire.

L'OCCITANE IRIS NOTRE FLORE EAU DE PURFUM

The bottle says it all: the perfume has the rich, deep scent of iris, which makes you wonder how the velvety softness and richness of the flower. Spraying on the perfume is one luxurious experience.

ESTEE LAUDER PURE COLOR SET

This set will surely delight any makeup lover. It contains a Pure Color eyeshadow palette, lipstick, lipcolor, eyeliner and blush to with, all contained in a leisure evening bag. A perfect enchantress gift.

L'OCCITANE BAIN CRÈME DE ROSES ROSE SILKY BATH AND ROSE BODY MILK

Get ready for that hot date by making your skin silky smooth with this rose-infused bath set. The duo contains moisturizing properties that will leave your skin supremely soft and with that great skin. Proves no ever moments up for a rose petal bath, you this one up.

ESTÉE LAUDER PLEASURES GIFT SET

This iconic perfume is a great gift for any woman this Valentine's. The set contains a miniature body lotion, shower gel and perfume that can easily be carried in any bag. Great for travel baths!

EMOTICONS WON'T DO

Long-distance relationships can be a nuisance. But chatting doesn't cut it anymore, so the entire world of flowers is now at your fingertips. Visit www.expressenglish.com, pick out the flowers of your choice, and have them sent to her. It flowers still doesn't cut it, the site offers other items. Whatever gets you closer is okay with us—even a teddy bear.

LUNCH DATE

Mandarin Oriental's Mandarin has what's special Century Lunch Mondays-Friday. Indulge in a buffet of appetizers, salads and soups, roast pork with or your choice of carvings from the bar, or a seafood special. Your choice baked Monday: a fish in cheese pattie cups; the exquisite beach of Provencal Friday's Cordon Bleu! For pairing, enjoy a Calvary lunch for two for a mere SMS! inside.

Love in many frames

Get a first dose of love-ups candy. And when you're ready for more, turn to D1 for the rest of 2thUP's Valentine Scrapbook

A PAGE from the Starbucks planner of Abby Cui, road hopper

HELMER Vicente, 16, freshmen ecstatic boyfriend with her boyfriend

PHOTO by

COMEDIENNE Ivana, Barb Pasaje and Bahaet de Villa

trying so hard
not to
think of you too much
touch your arm
your hair
not
laugh too much
at your jokes
stare at all
I'm trying so
hard not to
love you
—Bo Sjoelle

MAYA, outdoor in black and white (bottom), by Marga Pasaia

E MYDIN, editor's party-gowns' portrait maker

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Furry, furry valentine

By Vanessa Arellano Doctor
24/7 Correspondent

WHOEVER SAID VALENTINE'S Day is just for couples obviously has a lot more to understand about this very significant day.

While we all see hero and girl's spending romantic moments together on television and on print, or even hear friends from love rooms, chocolates, and candle lit dinners, there is a non-anywhere soaking than Valentine's as strictly exclusive to people.

In the same vein, nobody really said that a relationship is solely defined by romance. In fact, some of the most stable, sincere and unconditional friendships happens not between humans, but between man and his furry best friend.

Because we're all so caught with the February love buzz, we often forget that our dear pets, too, deserve a little bit of loving on this special occasion. Our pets have been with us all the way through thick and thin, and without judgment in question. It's about time we give something back.

How would you make Valentine's Day memorable for you and favorite furry friend? These guys love hero more tips.

Bonding! I owe it to both them. A walk to the airport, then a dog food ball, with a promise that I'll take him for a walk every day. How deserve to have a Valentine's Day treat. Why? Because they deserve to watch unconditional love. My pick, for example: Nadeki and My Alice are always ready to listen. When I'm feeling down, they're always there to share me up. And they don't nag—my Dotzil, Lawrazi, an Pitbull Nadeki, 3 years old, and Pitbull-Lowman Shepherd My Alice, 2 years old.

Every day is memorable with Nadeung. Especially when he's hungry, he wouldn't stop following me around so I'd prepare him food. When he's asleep, I find him so much and cute. It's funny is that when he sleeps on my bed he never does without a pillow on his head! He also doesn't mind if I lie down beside him and sleep as well. He's like a husband to me. Hahaha! How will I make Valentine's with him special? Well, first, I would cuddle him tummy! (As if I don't already do that, every day!), then I would give him a nice warm dinner and groom him. Finally, I would prepare his favorite food. He loves Green Tuna and Mackerel—Donna Cabrera, office clerk and cat lover extraordinaire, on her cat Nadeung, 2 years and 10 months old.

Dutchie is more than a pet. He's family. He saves me at the back of the car always in here—that's how important he is. Whenever I'm happy, I know he's there to share the joy with me. And if I don't feel too well, I'm also confident that I can talk my heart out with him, without fear of being judged. In fact, there are a lot of things I can discuss comfortably with Dutch that I can't with other people. He's my all-time favorite companion, that's why he deserves all and the best of my time this Valentine's Day. Labradors are water lovers, so I think a trip to the beach would be a great way to spend the day. The monster doesn't need to be dramatic, because I'm always out of the house, the best gift I can give him is my time and unclothed attention. He deserves it.—Lowell Ki-ag, lawyer, on his Labrador Dian Sub, 5 years old

I get huge chunk of bonus time at 2007. He was already running 2 years old then, but we hit off immediately. I bring him around everywhere I go and we're easy travelled to other cities together. He hangout with me because he is a people-lover. He is very insightful. He knows when I'm feeling happy and playful or just want to relax, lay back, and cuddle. And the ladies love him! He's now a Philippine Champion and I wanted...completed and handled him from scratch. He makes me proud because he became a champion in just eight months, which is a difficult feat, as dogs in the province normally take two years to attain that title. Additional chicken liver will be the highlight of his Valentine's Day, since he's an offbeat chocolate, sweet treats and other faux food. Then we'll probably go for a short walk around the neighborhood. My female pug Bertha has just come into heat, so I hope we'll probably be thrilled to have a date!—Ernie Morales, pug breeder and enthusiast, on Hugo, 3 years old.

E-mail the author at vee_doctor@yahoo.com

LAWYER Joy Oscar and My Alice

DONNA Cabrera and Nadeung

LAWYER Lowell Ki-ag and Dian Sub

Waiting for your own fairy tale

By Ruby de Vera
24/7 Contributor

WE'VE ALL TAKEN down the Christmas decor, lit the fireworks, and wished everybody Kung Hei Fat Chai. We all know what comes next, the one day most single people dread. Valentine's day.

There may be Blind love and platonic love among other kinds, but what really makes the world go round is that heart-wrenching, butterflies-in-the-stomach, dread-nine-feeling, sleep-depriving, cold hand-in-your-hand kind of love.

Romantic love has inspired countless artworks, movies, songs, business deals and even crimes. A theory goes that everything in this world all comes down to one thing: to find the perfect match.

We pursue good education to get a good job, which leads to good pay which leads to buying power, which leads to living more attractive to the opposite sex.

Men who have power are always more attractive than men who have perfect cheekbones. Ask Donald Trump if you don't believe me.

Insecurities is a good pimp. During Valentine season, expensive shop openings at various resorts, jewelry stores, lingerie shops, beauty centers and more.

The wedding business is a multimillion-peso industry. Married people get taxed less because they have to pay for the house, car, and children. All these because of love and affection toward another person.

Fairy tales

The beginning of a relationship is a most magical time that we'll always fondly look back to. Nobody seems or do any wrong, the smiles never end, the lack of table manners is cute, and even the arguing of who hangs up first is considered operating procedure for the first few months.

Couples tryto know each other's likes and dislikes. When they're apart, they feel pain torture. They want to tell everyone to have a reason to be together. There is no "too...tired," "too late" or "too busy illness."

Couples exchange text sms, super—"Good morning," "How you, sweet?," "What did you have for lunch/dinner/meeting?," "I miss you," "Are you thinking of me?"

Then the princess kisses the prince and suddenly he's a frog, or he kisses her and she becomes a witch.

Horror stories

Everyone whose heart is not made of stone has rarely gone through at least one heartbreak in one's lifetime.

As children, we were set up first in grade school, teachers would cut our hearts in half and distribute them to the class, and the kids scurry around the room, trying to find their other half.

One such 'dilemma.' I couldn't find my match until recently though I would have to write a Valentine card to myself, a really sad thought for an 8-year-old. My teacher found me a half; it's with another lost kid.

> *Love may suck the first time, but it doesn't mean the next one will be more of the same*

In college, when raging hormones and peer pressure are at their peak, I had a humongous crush on this boy. We were in the same class, and we were sort of friends. Until now I still don't know if he ever had any idea, but he started to get a little too nice.

When the object of your affection pays a little more attention to you than usual, the tendency is to start having delusions that he likes you back.

Those delusions were encouraged by like boy asking my advice about Valentine gifts. The delusions were also promptly destroyed when, on the day itself, he bonded me a card such a red heart on the flap. I flipped it over and it had my friend's name on it.

No guarantees

There are the things that I should have banged my head but I can't count the number of times I felt a tradesman inside myself, taking out my heart, and giving it a warm hug because it felt really cold inside my chest.

The promise of forever and ever is not and in choice. No insurance company would cover us into a paltry or broken hearts and shattered dreams. Even marriage, with the binding agreement in black and white recognized in all courts, is not a guarantee of eternal bliss. Divorces are skimming, though.

When a chapter comes to an end, you cry and mourn the passing of an era. Give it the grieving it deserves, but don't hold on to something that would hurt more than give happiness.

Every cloud has a silver lining, everything happens for a reason, there is a bigger plan— all clichés and all true. It doesn't mean that we don't get battle scars, but that's all it really is: something to show our grandchildren when we're 90 and senile.

Still, however crumpled we might have gotten in the past, it's no reason to immediately suspect the next candidate as a potential tackle whom only your pour to life a on banana chop your fragile heart in pieces.

Every person is unique, and while learning from past mistakes is good, we shouldn't get cynical about love in all forms. There are no rules in handling relationships, and even if there were life would be utterly boring we'd all be flinging ourselves down a cliff and be extinct.

Don't be the idiot who waits for a prearchitect when someone next to you could be a movie-and chance. The next time you see him/her, go over to him/her and tell him/her how you feel. Who knows, it might just end happily ever after.

2bU LIFESTYLE

Surgical Workshop for Beautiful Butt

Techniques
• Subfascial Augmentation
• Intramuscular Augmentation
• Submuscular Augmentation
• Brazilian Butt Lift

Date
April 13, 2008

Venue
Lung Center of the Philippines

Limited to 40 participants only!!!

2bU! Valentine Scrapbook

Feast your eyes on photos, letters, poems and essays that celebrate love and its many different faces—friendship, passion, heartbreak, moving on, loving again

Fiery coal and hot chocolate

Having things go at a slow, comfortable pace means there's more time to appreciate the little things

PRETENDING to be flirtatious at the mall

By Bianca Consunji
2bU Correspondent

"YOU KNOW WHAT you have the enormous depth of a straw," a friend once told me casually over lunch. "You don't seem to leave love—or even room—to express your feelings to someone you like."

Enhance

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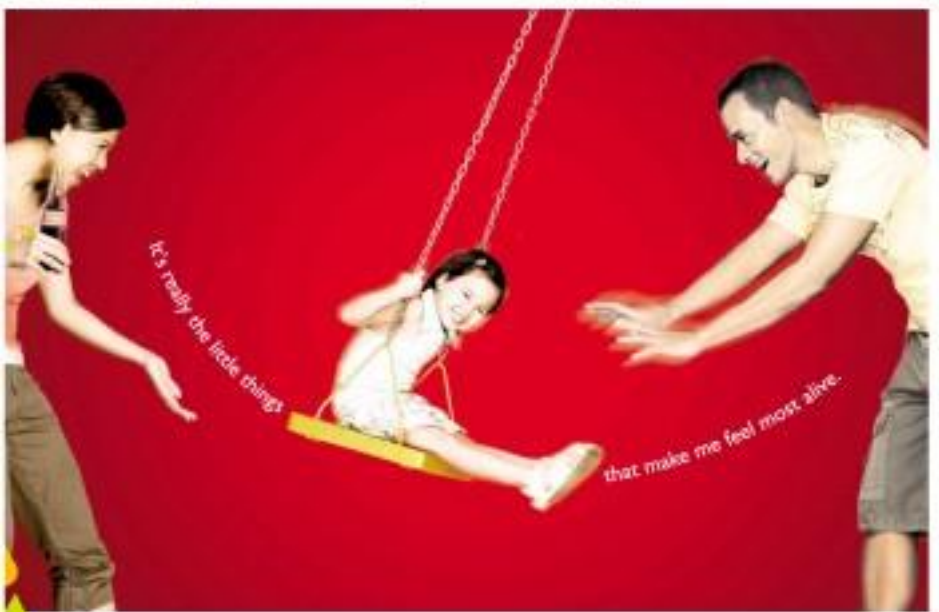


No matter how busy I get,
I always make time for the things I enjoy.

Quiet moments with the people I care for.
Getting enough exercise. A bit of dancing or jazz
or the kind (and times) that really make me happy.

With the right balance of all those little things,
I get everything I want out of life.

Paolo Avelino

A balanced life is a Sparkling Life.

A diary-novela by CARLO J. CAPARAS

To have and to hold

Art: ARNELA AVETRIA

A-LIPIN

PUGAD BABOY

GARFIELD

BABY BLUES

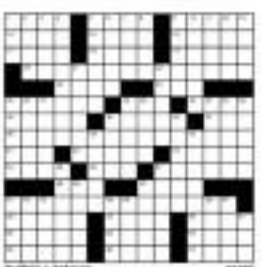
KYOKO AND MISSY

LOVEWHOTS

KIKO PAKSHINE

BEN

DAILY CROSSWORD



HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCES DRAKE

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

	8	5	4					
7				2		9	3	
3			7		5			
1		4		7	6			
	3		5	1		7		
		9	3		2	1		
	1			3	9		7	6
	2					3	9	
						8		

Difficulty Level ★★★

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

6	7	3	4	5	3	1	2	8
1	5	8	4	2	7	1	3	6
9	1	2	8	6	9	4	5	7
2	6	3	1	9	7	5	8	4
7	8	9	5	2	4	6	7	3
4	5	7	3	8	6	2	9	1
8	3	6	7	1	5	9	4	2
5	4	1	9	3	2	8	6	7
3	2	1	6	4	8	7	3	5

Fiery coal . . .

From page D1

This was around your high school, and, for some reason, she decided that my being affectionate (or lack thereof) made for good conversation over plates of sizzling chicken.

We were 15 years old then, and our idea of 'love' was limited to how much we blushed whenever our respective crushes came within view. As I got older and got into relationships, I eventually dismissed my friend's assessment as a juvenile judgment of my ability—that is, until my boyfriend (then jokingly) told me, "you suck at being sweet."

No convenient dots, actually. As a proud graduate of the Castles Bound School of Thought, when feud pinches and punches are the traditional way of expressing affection, I never thought of Valentine's Day as reason for celebration. Not when it ushered otherwise civilized people into stupefying, sentimental pools of trash.

Other girls spend hours cooing sweet nothings to their boyfriends on the phone while slumbering fluffy stuffed animals. Eh? We talk about work mostly, but also about art, random people on the street, what our childhoods did to contract us for the icky and other various forms of tomfoolery. In other words, stuff we talked about when we were just friends.

Some people find it weird. "You two haven't changed at all," commented a common friend. "I was half-expecting you guys to start cuddling in the middle of a shoot when you first got together. If I didn't know better, I wouldn't know you were a couple."

"You want us to make out in the middle of a shoot?" I asked.

"If so, we really . . ."

"See, problem solved."

Movie-romance

There are numerous made-for books and movies; say, "Gone With the Wind," "Romeo and Juliet," and "Moulin Rouge." In films such as these, the star-crossed lovers scorch the silver screen with smoldering passion, complete with rose-filled eyes and heart-breaking soliloquies. Women pound their fists on the soft-bulb chests of the leading men (who in turn grab their wrists and promise the world to them).

In the movies, there are rarely any fairy-tale endings. More often than not, the famous romances end in tragedy, or at least, a question. Stories about normal relationships—the ones that don't involve supernatural ones—don't make good press, after all. Like my current relationship.

"Where did all the drama go?" Ryan wrote in his blog. "The room angers I am, the room I write. Little snippets of bitter wordplay. Purposely ambiguous entries. That happened a lot before."

Apparently, the drama went to whenever his writing muse went, because he blogs at an average of once a month now.

Payoffs

It's not a bad thing really this lack of drama. I don't go to work wearing sunglasses to hide a sight of crying, and there are no occasions to duel with, or subtleties file of anger over the tiniest things. But there are payoffs; a weather-managed sun-tanned, sighing she trained the drama-strewn circles that once

HANGING out in an open field

characterized my online journal.

Looking back on my blog archives, I noticed the events that had the most comments were the ones about my previous relationship (which was a boiling mass of angst) and the temperamental breakup that followed.

Readers reveled in the drama: They shared stories about their own problems and gave advice. When they didn't know, however, is that the entries were often written with a tear-splashed keyboard. Drama provided plenty of heat, but it meant getting burned on a regular basis—like walking on a bed of coal, so to speak.

So there isn't anything wrong with normal, really. There's plenty to revel in without the additional servings of drama. Like feeling in the middle of an open field at night, or running through the mall like a giddy child. Like sharing banana splits topped with whipped cream and cherries.

Having things go at a slow, comfortable pace means there's more time to appreciate the little things, such as the feel of his prickly chin stubble on my shoulder, the smell of clean cotton mingled with cologne, and the tip of his finger tracing patterns on my palm.

It's as warm and as comfortable as a mug of hot chocolate, and it definitely feels like home.

E-mail the author at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Milko, my boy

I ONCE HAD A YELLOW LAB named Milko

whose coat was as bright as yours

He loved to eat everything

even when I'd tell him "no"

He used to sit beside me

when I'd feel down and blue

He'd look at me with his big, brown eyes

then I'd suddenly see mine in "his eyes"

Milko has gone up, up and away

and I miss him everyday

But whenever I think of the fun times we had

I honestly don't feel that super bad

I know we'll never have another dog like him

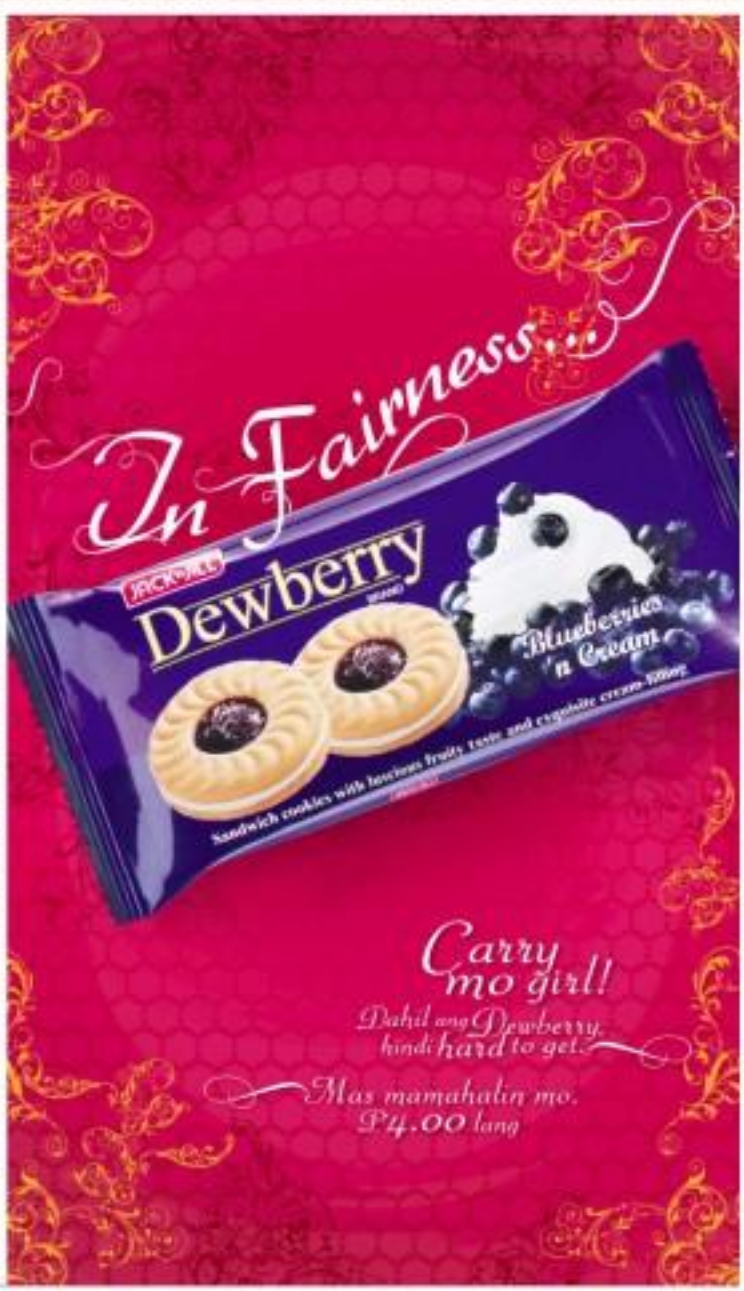
one that's very smart, cute and fat

He'll always be my baby boy

and I'll never ever forget that

—Alexei Villanueva, 28, Customer Driver

A pagan's prayer of thanks and praise



'He have a lover'

By Gibbs Cadiz

SIS, FRANS, AND COUNTESS: That's how long I've been single. You can forgive me, therefore, if I look at the annual Valentine hoopla with despression and disenchantment.

I take all the ritual inside with huge bags of sob—err, since our puny gents wouldn't do it anymore in this day-and-age of 24/7 spin, when everything from toothpaste to lunchmeat double-brand a throbbing connection to Eric Jr.

Why have I been on my own for this long? Beats me. My friends have some theories. They think it's too choosy for my own good. They think most guys get either intimidated or bored quickly with what I do, what I like, how I love to fall.

They think I'm too square—doesn't drink or smoke, hardly bar-hops, prefers movies or long dinners with friends to partying, digs the soundtrack musicals of Barbra and Judy, wears his shirt with decorum and collar, is not in to color-coordinating his outfits or dyeing his hair the latest shade of burnt sienna, thinks Starbucks is overpriced, can't dance if his life depended on it. So, in a word, old-fashioned. Sige na nga.

Somewhere unreleased

I also happen to be reasonably well-read, sensible, generally cheerful and easy-going, fair and loyally loyal to my friends to their my complete awe. I think...still intact. I once drove off going beyond sexual friendships with the nice people (even if Lord knows there are many good-looking dogs in that mold) because I covet the industry, and getting entangled with anyone from there risks conflict of interest complications.

No, it's the time is to some for me to emerge from somewhere unrelated—an unemployment, perhaps, but with a liking for budgets and flats? Hahaha. Someone 24 hours into sex in bed but or Falls Church? Someone who'd sentimental about the first time we met in the comic con office? to be "old-fashioned" in 30?

That's, that's what my friends mean when they say I'm too choosy. Can't help it, though. I've never felt the need to hop on the bandwagon out of curiosity—just because it's the guy and tonight. Sure I began settling down one by one. After my last breakup (a bad one) years ago, I told myself I could be happy and contented with just my friends sometimes.

For the most part that's been true, but there you would be (Don't start getting hitched! chameleons that you. On single. Every-two buddy, can become less of a person—and nothing to us. You learn to accept it, and study everyone you). When it does get damn lonely (or some time, I'm you would be yourself! chuckling at the periodic farrago behind your position to forget love and stitch it out with your images.

His luck

So much for the pestering. Seven days without God is a place worthy of a movie or bread off to the mall. I do wish I could have someone sing calls me—cute, bear, friends of course, mollies as they are.

Paul Rhoades is "four-and-four" years that we met his beforehand a party. Pals hooked me they both loved the Grove cocktails, and by the end of the night Mr. Wonderful was hooked—for now it turned out, because he sure by his cover right up to the fifth-deflated end.

Hello, Angel Mendez, Broadway musical willing to date me? Haha.

And Darryl Washington (and his wife—they were married female roots office or a plus, and that's how they met. In whenever I vanish a close three-level remember to look 40 and right at me sometimes, you never know—you might end up literally riding eleven with, shows. The Bling One...but no hablo-cha.

(What you do get me the occasional tidbits, like these trembling girls who watched "Double Dribble-ball." "Oh, so dancing finding we mentioned, any Jordan's pants. I can't wear, especially," and. To which a friend of mine cannot in here couldn't resist pointing back, "Slip over, Double-Dribble-ball, you're. Dribble long hips! as "Peter Pan.")

But, yes, I admit to this: my inner pesky persistence can be a spoilsport. Just when I start to wonder, especially when someone who doesn't read. Does that make me a snob? I hope not. I don't mean, after all, that one has to bone up on Proust or Nabokov (I've never read Proust myself!)...but that he likes reading up new ideas and enjoys the magic of words.

But, oh, what to do with bad guys.

And I keep everyone else gets a turn, but the person I'm supposed to go all gooey for...he or how should know his status and subject such up sooner, or I'd never hear the end of it from friends saying he perfect time for all the perfect ex I'd made of them dates.

Galore's tale

Sarsoto Court, in Puerto Galera, a cute pair—cool and color-looking—caught my collective eye. He also seemed to like the sentiment, however he kept looking on way. Therefore it was a nice strong up sweet friends to see who could approach him first. That night, I sat in a bar and there he was opposite me, clapping loud and cooing to "Happy." But he was very nice to me, and we texted each other—for—He lived I presumed.

He sure ate in a bit, recognized me, and raised his bottle in a toast. He, was I giddy. After a while, he auditioned for me to join him in the dirt out of the bar and walked towards his room. Somewhere in, hello, where are you from. Then, just to be sure I wasn't entering dangerous territory, I asked the questions "Are you cute, your love?"

Yes, third party long after," he said. "He knows I love."

Thanks! Just Blinks going down, down, down!

My friends were hysterical when I told them about it afterwards. How you know why I'm still single.

This article first appeared in the author's blog www.bloggerlads.com. E-mail gcadiz@inquirer.com.ph.

Kitten's keeper

Lloyd calls me 'Kitten.' And at times I feel more like a pet than a girlfriend

By Irene C. Perez

HEY DAD,

Ever been what? I think I got the knockout I got the neighbor, hadn't told from you, you're the smart, adventurous one, after all. And mom was the homebody, remember?

And that sense of wanting to date the world spells the difference between me and Lloyd, the guy I was with during my last December visit.

Sorry, by the very rough introduction. Sounds: "Dad, this is my boyfriend, Lloyd."

Lloyd: "Yang anak ninyo pa pamatay!"

Ugh.

We had been together there for a year and a half and I thought it was high time you meet him. He was, after all, the one who made you place other you were gone. He took care of me like you would, and the resemblance.

More reasons than I could be a handful—a stubborn, incensed only child.

I must admit, Lloyd has mastered the common man-ness. He knows PBB is a flower, not an emcee. He lets me off with a warning when I'm over hours late. He understands my need to maintain circles of friends and my craving for unreasonable designer bags. He accepts my violent mood swings (Pagsa-pasan ko nalang ang bad hair day ko). He's not like people on a whim whenever I'm happy, annoyed or sad.

Pet

Lloyd calls me "Kitten." And at times I feel more like a pet than a girlfriend with such hugging and pinching.

He, unsurprisingly, has the lowest patience for shopping—he has been through my pre-love materials, skinny jeans. Asked me when. He's been with me scanning many malls and garages for key finds that he could just pass off as a stylist.

Everyone says we look like each other in a "small circle, big circle" kinda way. They said couples like that were meant to be. I said I was scared I might be finding a relative. It already did a background check on me. He even has his sister with your side of the family for me, to see. We're not related, thank goodness.)

We celebrated our second anniversary Feb. 10 and I was thrilled and surprised how things had turned out.

He reminded me of the importance of family, something I might have forgotten since you passed away when I was 12. He showed me what happiness is by example. He gives me so much love and support I might not be able to keep up. He minds my care for someone before caring for myself—a grand dilemma for two control freaks.

Then

Dad had been my first boyfriend, huh? I used to frown on annoying clingy girls and swooning glassy-eyed couples that'd scream "get a room!" at them. I think we became one of them. Hindi na ko nanuod, huh.

A friend recently told me: "He's lucky he has you." I replied: "No, I am lucky I have him, and although I may be overactually evil, wala siyang tupi sa utak." Pilosopong.

And you know what's sappy dad? I named arenlogo@msn.com and discovered Jim Gaffigan's Jim and Angelina were the "perfect match." If that's really the case, then I'll still be fighting you won't be able to walk me down the aisle, ha!

Quoting "Gossip Girl's" Blair, the girl least likely to give relationship advice: "When you get a boyfriend, you become the best friend and the best friend becomes the second best friend."

I'm glad to report it was that Lloyd is exactly that: the best friend-boyfriend-companion before.

XOXO,
Irene Sweet

Last letter

By Beach Bum

SINCE I GAVE YOU UP I'VE BEEN lonely

But I have to hide my feelings

I have to be strong

'Cuz I know I have to do this on my own.

I'm sorry I had to let you go my love,

But that doesn't mean I don't love you anymore

One day my hurting will end along with the longing

One day I'll stop crying

One day I'll let it pass of mind

One day I'll smile again

One day I'll fall asleep and have sweet dreams

One day I'll move on

One day I'll be able to face you and react now how with a smile

'Cuz I know someone will take care of my baby love

I just hope he has not have baby for you don't found you

I'm sorry for being the one to break your heart

I'm sorry for talking you for granted

I'm sorry for not paying attention

I'm sorry for hurting HIM.

I'm sorry for making you cry

I'm sorry for not showing my true

I'm sorry for not keeping my promise

I pray to God that one day you'll forgive me for what I've done

For I know there are no second chances

Thank you for the nice and tender wording

Thank you for the flowers (about 101)

Thank you for holding my hand when I'm stressed

Thank you for the years of love

Thank you for the memories

I will always keep them in my pocket

People second me are a strong one

If they only knew that even a night My walls have pieces of my broken heart scattering on the floor

I miss you stuff

I miss your kiss

I miss your smile

I miss your touch

I miss you when you look at me...

Forgive me for holding on

I should've listened to you,

Now, I'm more lost because I let you go

Don't get me wrong, I'm not telling to go with you to win you back

I just want you to know what I feel inside

And I know you're happy

Just please let me hug you one last time before I finally say goodbye

Clearing the heart's debris

By Hava

IT'S HAPPENING TO ME how he I've come once the time I thought I couldn't go on. I still remember that day, how everything seemed to be so wrong.

How the ground just suddenly dropped from under me. How every word that came out of your mouth seemed to hit me like a wrecking ball.

And how each word weakened my resolve to say that I fought so hard to keep from smashing into a thousand pieces.

More so, how I vomited with tears in my eyes as they began to crumble and fall to the ground when the wrecking ball kept slamming away.

I started to pick up the pieces the morning after. Trying to put them back together in the hopes that I might be able to rebuild. Only to find out that I couldn't do it alone. For look away a lot of the pieces I carried. Never to give them back to me. That's when I decided to stop trying to raise back the foundations. Of how sorry the pieces I held in my hand clung with the rest of the rubble.

Cleaning up

I then started to clean up the mess. Some only needed to be swept away while others needed the help of a bulldozer. There were the those that needed to be further broken down before they could be swept away. There were even big, big pieces that were too heavy for me to move alone. I can push most of them myself. The others only need to be kicked out of the way.

I can see the ground again. It may not be as pristine as when we first saw it. Save for a few holes that need some patching. It's still level and strong. And the mess is gone. Knowing that despite the heavy weight that we placed on it through the years and having to endure the debris that fell on it with the destruction of what we had constructed, it's still good.

However, even if I do get a chance to rebuild, I don't. I'll rebuild. It has served its purpose. It has endured so much already and rebuilding on it won't be right.

I'm looking for another place where I can build something new. Not really conscientiously looking, just keeping my eyes open and my mind open to the possibilities. Somewhere I'll be able to build again. But right now, I'm just going to enjoy myself.

By the way, you're welcome to go back if ever to help me clean up. But you don't have to.

The author is "relationships coach at tutor" for Yellow 98.7

LOVE'S LOVE
Tom and Cozy

Love is siopao

By Pam Pilotan

FOLKS! MI DIOS!

I was fast ing a crappy day,
A crawdaddy cruddy crappy day.

People kept screwing with my schedule, I had three articles to edit, the closest kept messing out, the office phones wouldn't stop ringing, my mobile phone kept losing its signal, one of your IT guys spent hours fixing my inbox, my PC's fan shook, my cable Internet connection kept dying, my self-diagnosed ADD went berserk and my concentration was shot.

It was total chaos at the workplace.

On top of that, a guy I interviewed via e-mail sent me his answers two days late. I had spent days writing the article in my head but when it was time to finally work on it, I couldn't. He killed my momentum and I couldn't function properly. It didn't help that I was forced to work on my desktop. I like working on my laptop in study mode.

It was a good thing that Pining, Paolo and Janess were in the office with me. Otherwise, I might have started pulling my hair out.

"I can't wait for this day to be over," I kept telling Kat, who was just a bit of that day either.

Janess said something about her friends going out on Thursday night, where we've all been invited to close Saguo.

"I know!" I said. "My friends are all drunk in Saguo now and they're texting me."

Paolo suggested we go to Kikiam three stores the familiar pads of drunkenness but I knew it was unlikely because I was still recording with my article.

I was still recording with my article when my cousin Bill called to tell me they had left supper for me at the lobby on their way home from Saguo.

Me: "Siopao ba iyon?"

Bill: "Umayo na kami."

Me: "Wael, ba't di kayo umalis ah!"

Bill, "Eh wala, umalis na kami. Basta kanin mo yung siopao na iyon, kakagutom."

And that I was down there Rosenes got my siopao.

When I searched the ground floor, I found Bill and my friends Baby and Mae go sitting at the lobby. They gave me hugs and handed me the siopao.

Me: "Ano ba ito

10 things to do on Valentine's Day

By Blanca Cavanagh
2007 Correspondent

VALENTINE'S DAY, MORE often than not, comes from those of people who are in a relationship, looking for something to do either for their significant others or their lonely selves.

True, restaurants are always full of lovestruck couples or big groups of people out to have a good time.

However, Valentine's celebrations need not be limited to expensive dinners and giant bouquets of roses. Want to do something unusual for the day? We've got a list of things for you to do, whether you're preparing for a hot date with your significant other or celebrating unmarried single-dom with your friends (or by yourself).

Have a picnic

Lay out a plaid blanket, make some sandwiches, pop some bubbly, and have a picnic in the park—or your backyard, if you prefer. A picnic will save you from the heat-induced Valentine's dine-in/take-in, but is more romantic than a generic dine-in restaurant.

If you want something more than that, set up a candlelit table and serve dinner or chocolate fondue.

Watch a play

Take your date to watch a play (more on a movie won't produce the same effect). Have coffee afterward so you talk about the production and share a laugh or two about your favorite parts.

Looking for the ultimate Valentine's Day play? Check out Rubeng Abad's "Juan" at the Tagalbong Chester Paganaghan at Ateneo de Manila High School.

Explore the city

If you have the whole day blocked off for your date, explore the city. Try a non-Mall date—hands, new sight, smells, tastes left. You might end up the evening places you've never found before. Like a cool locale for the mall-cold or a small-art gallery.

Go to the spa

A stop to the spa is something you can't do impossible. To relax, whether you're trying out a new salt scrub or enjoying massage with your significant other, or having a full-body treatment to escape from the monotony Valentine's Day rings, a couple of hours at the spa will guarantee pure bliss.

ILLUSTRATION BY MARY RODALES

Bake cookies for single friends

This is a foolproof way to make other people happy on Valentine's: If you're single, you're shutting (non-romantic) love with other people. If you're attached, you're showing them your social (moral) sensitive around your significant other. No better way to prove that getting is better than receiving!

Have a romantic scavenger hunt

Go beyond merely handing over the usual bouquet of roses or box of chocolates by setting up a scavenger hunt for your special someone. Your clues (a piano that means something to both of you, like the place where you first met or had your first kiss). This will take a lot of effort, but could be one of your most special Valentine's Days.

Hire a singing telegram

"Give me the song heroine!" We think it will never go out of style. If you don't have much of a singing voice yourself, get some friends to sing for your significant other, or hire a singing group. If you're still in school, there'll surely be an organization that offers singing telegrams as a fundraiser. Surprise your crush with a song or two.

Go dancing

Dance like no one's watching. Join a ballroom-dancing club and be the only young couple or group in a sea of mushroom and have some whole some single fun. Want something more romantic? Bring your date to a rooftop of a condo and play music from your iPod dock.

Set up a date for your parents

Whether you're single or not, Valentine's Day is a good way to enjoy your parents. After all, if they didn't get together, you wouldn't even be alive. Get them tickets to a concert of a retro band, or splurge on a fancy dinner for two. Can't break the bank? Get your siblings out of the house and set up dinner for them, so let them wallow'd for the night.

Hold an anti-Valentine's party with your friends

When all else fails, hold an anti-Valentine's party with some good friends. With them, you don't have to pretend you're not bitter or heartbroken—order a cheesy movie on videoke, watch a movie or two, and binge on pizza and ice cream. You can also go for the slightly less pathetic route by going for a drama party (see, Las Vegas night or Bad-comes in the '90s) to make things seem less, with more wallowing.

E-mail the author at blanca.cavanagh@yahoo.com

Have a date with yourself

It may be your best date yet

By Nina Mark M. Soldao
2007 Correspondent

THIS NUMBER 2 seems to be the official number of Valentine's Day. Everyone is in pairs: lovers in t-shirts, couples enjoying dinner at the best restaurants in town, partners-in-walking a movie or supposed V-Day concert.

He used to feel though if you are alone, single and cannot grab the nearest person even for a fast dance. This February 14, why not spend quality time and have a date with someone who will love you? Yes, get enough of love from you!

The ways to pamper yourself are many. Love yourself and don't feel guilty or selfish about it. Today is for loving, after all, even (if it doesn't involve you) for your person.

Before you assume "no date" ideas that you might want to do on the 14th—and maybe on the next days to come! Be shameless, love (freakish) be impressed only during special occasions.

If watching a romantic movie all alone while being surrounded by lovey-dovey couples makes you want to roll your eyes for two hours, consider enjoying Valentine's less at home then.

Bring out those Meg Ryan (the queen of romantic) flicks, get cozy in your favorite spot together with a box of tissue since you'll probably end up sniffing within the first 30 minutes.

Why not visit those Dove Boutiques and Home Welcome to pamper and refuse to their body and soul? Don't be inspired by their current asset Prince Channing point?

The best thing about watching romantic movies at home is you can cry over your lovable cat without bothering (or) anyone's feelings.

Are you the type who'd feel bad if you found yourself the only single person in a couples-filled restaurant?

Don't go out there and just bring the candlelit dinner to your home. Flip through your recipe books or go online to find a special dish that sounds both yummy and easy. Stock in the grocery not only your ingredients, but also local home and relieve your inner bridging Push.

Don't forget to light a candle, dim the lights and play some Sade before you enjoy your culinary creation.

Afterward, congratulate yourself for a cooking job (hopefully) well done. If you feel a bit sad, put your back for being so independent—and maybe by being like those movie characters waiting for happy ending—and every-body-and every-body should be ready.

Pamper yourself

One way to love yourself is for you to take great care of your body. Instead of the usual shoe-shopping or wardrobe-hunting, a great idea is to head to the grocery in search of the healthiest food and drink around.

Eat only until you do your body good; you'll also realize how long you have been missing out on some of the fun-tasting treats out there such as cranberry juice, green tea and soy milk with green tea.

After shopping, try out even for just a day some physical activity that you've never entertained doing. The options are several and all of them are surely fun and relaxing: music that, yoga or tai chi or walk-climbing.

Having busy weeks all day pampering so, while exercises is not having dates, schedule an appointment with your favorite manicurist, barber and masseuse. Have those nails cleaned and colored.

Moisturize your stressed and traumatized area of body. Ditch the already-past Sibarian hairstyle from the last decided it is-time(!) and go for a new cheerful.

Close after a facial. Green therapy optimum. Have your teeth cleaned or whitened for by a Brazilian wax.

Make as numerous gives you a massage.

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Soundtrack of my love life

By Dhren M. Palanduan
2007 Contributor

This is more or less a definitive rundown of songs that reflect my current thoughts and mood.

AS SOMEONE WHO'S PERPETUALLY lovesick, I happily respond to certain songs that precisely throw enthusiastic statements of my life.

They're not all breakthrough-love ballads or sentimental ruptures, and each has a particular line about attraction or devotion that honestly speaks and appeals to you. Remember the hymn, in their entirety, speak about romance as I see it. I posted a blog entry last July "Best for Love," which listed my favorite melancholy-to-sentimental-wonderful pop and alternative love duties. I narrowed them down to about two dozen.

The list has changed since then; this is more or less a definitive rundown of songs that reflect my current thoughts and mood. I've loved some songs since I was a teen (and they still apply meaningfully to my situations), while others are new discoveries that succinctly capture words I've always wanted to say.

They remind me that through the years, I've learned that love can drag, fragile again, and need really be necessarily

1. "Love Is Strange," Everything But The Girl
(After you've had it, you'll never want to quit.)
2. "I Want You," Silverchair
(Well, I want to paint that picture with that great book in your eyes.)
3. "Love You," Depeche Mode
"Maybe our communication could prevail."
4. "Bound," The Beloved
"Your smile is like the sunset, your kiss the seven seas."
5. "Can't Help Falling In Love," Lick The Tins
(Cheek! I can.) Should it be easier?"
6. "Show Me Heaven," Maria McBride
"I'm not denying I'm frightened so much as you."
7. "I Need You Here," Color It Red
"Now it's here and I feel older. Saving love is so much as you..."
8. "Truth and Beauty," Heather Nova
"If I could only love myself, I would love myself to you."
9. "The Flame," Cheap Trick
"You were the first, you'll be the last."
10. "Love Is Your Eyes," Sixpence
"If you have a mind you high-achieve any love that I've ever found."
11. "Tempest of Jupiter," Yanni
"Did you ever see while you were looking for yourself out there?"
12. "So Long As Is Mistress," Jim Brickman
"Forget that our time is almost up."
13. "I Hope That I Don't Fall In Love With You," 10,000 Maniacs
"I had a love and now I fear you calling out for me."
14. "Screaming Infidelities," Indochinese/Cumbersome
"I'm missing your bed, I never sleep."
15. "I Will Follow You Into The Dark," Death Cab For Cutie
"No blinding lights, or sounds to wake of within, just our hands clasped 'on night.'"
16. "Moving Enough," Sheryl Crow
"Let us see, but please don't leave."
17. "If I Ain't," Kimi Dyed
"I wanna be with you forever; if you're your's not over late."
18. "In Your Eyes," Peter Gabriel
"The light, the heat, I am complete."
19. "Here's To The Night," Eve 6
"Don't let me let you go."
20. "Will You Be There In The Morning," Heart
"You're my obsession, my addiction, my drug."
21. "In Demand," Texas
"Now I've got someone who can give me his words my name is after much."
22. "Bond," Bond
"You're the one and only thing when I got no more to go to."
23. "Better Love," Lunchbreast
"I was driving home, the morning after with the taste of you still on my tongue."
24. "Bless," Anni Hilchcott
"He found me in moonlight, made me want to be home."
25. "Hallelujah," Jeff Buckley
"Maybe there's a God above / But all I've ever saw, and all he's done was shooting, cold / Every breath we draw was Hallelujah."

Valentine dates with a twist

By Nina Mark M. Soldao
2007 Correspondent

ROMANTICALLY UNATTACHED? That's perfectly okay—even during Valentine's Day.

You can still go out with someone and enjoy those candlelit dinners even if you're single. Remember, not all dates should be romantic in nature; we go celebrations! Have a grand time with whoever you want—it is relatives, as a friend, as a person—and just ignore the stares from all those serious sitting couples.

So what to remember with this V-Day?

Your best friend, who happens to be single as well

Go watch a movie, enjoy someone to pig out during a romantic comedy just like every other couple out there. Then it's plenty to do and even more to talk about: favorite celebrities, most memorable breakups, worst times, traumatic blind dates and drama significant others. Expect to have this with all the couples thinking you and your friend are gays and lesbos!

Your maid

Considering she's single, gift your loyal ally with a day off—but only if you Pretend her for the emotional service she's been giving you by treating her out to your favorite luxury restaurant. Buying her popcorn for a movie of her choice or bringing her to a Valentine concert of her favorite idols. To make it truly memorable for her, shut bring up anything about housework, and never ask her to go buy the tickets or get you that glass of water.

Your only living parent/grandparent

Imagine how sad your mom has been ever since your dad passed away, or how extremely bored your grandfather has been feeling ever since your grandma went to heaven.

You can still go out with someone and enjoy those candlelit dinners even if you're unattached

Show them some love this Valentine's Day by bringing them to a place they used to love and frequent together, or if there's no romantic for you, a friend now someone, parlor or spa will do the trick. Don't forget to cap the night off with a bunch of flowers or a box of chocolates.

Your favorite little cousin, nephew or niece

Don't think kids aren't enjoy Valentine's Day because they are just old enough to understand the romantic aspect of it yet. They'll absolutely love the boxes of chocolates, stuffed toys and those special V-Day desserts at your favorite restaurants! Don't throw in their Sunday best and get ready for a truly unique V-Day date. And oh, never ask them to go buy the tickets or get you that glass of water.

Your biggest admirer

If you're up to a challenge and you are feeling a little more daring (and humorous), why not spend the day with someone who likes you, even if you don't see forever with that person (or one if you don't like the person at all).

Who knows, forever might be in store for the two of you as a couple. But don't pretend you're with a romantic candle dinner complete with a serenade. Dropping by the nearest fastfood chain or deciding around the mall for some ice cream sounds like a good enough way of putting a smile on your admirer's face.

Your pet

Why not V-Date is just for those with two legs? Your Shelzie is some spoiled peasant dog food for a week. Why not gift Whitey with a fabulous and eye-catching dog collar so she can be the hottest dog in your block? Instead of the usual dog it, walk-blasting dogs can be used for serious you want, right?) pamper and bring her to the park for some quality time.

E-mail the author at nina.soldao@yahoo.com

Love for sale

Valentine's Day for all the passion and sincerity that come with it, has become a profit-generating event

By Vanessa Avellana Dacer
DAILY EXPONENT

IT'S FEBRUARY AGAIN, AND whether we like it or not, every corner of the country is flooded crimson—red roses, chocolates in gold and red boxes, and stuffed toys, and a storm of heart sensors.

For those who crave novelty, we are literal cangers comprising both men and women with romantic songs and almost romantic performances in public and, for some reason, everybody seems to be making more than ever out scrooling. 2 year (nay), Everything and everybody transforms into sugar and spice. The day we're all born craving up for has arrived.

And what a price tag it comes with!

From bank, people seemed to be already satisfied with handwritten love letters and three red roses. Now, however, it appears that the items has evolved to making it "extraordinary."

In fact, companies spend months stressing over a food packed Valentine's Day gimmick, to make sure that they milk on everything there is to milk from the starry-eyed.

Empty wallets

Valentine's Day, for all the passion and sincerity that come with it, has been transformed into a profit-generating event—and most of us realize this only after the drama has faded and our find our wallets empty.

Most I'm not against Valentine's. I believe that every individual, whether in a relationship or not, has the right to enjoy it in whatever way he or she sees most appropriate and celebrations, like with the gazillions of attractive promos businesses are throwing left and right during love month, much of our time is wasted in finding ways on how to get the most of these special offers.

Wouldn't this time and effort be better spent if we just let wide our special sentiments open from the start, every single day, as the most precious of gifts. What's less is that it doesn't cost a single cent.

Admittedly, it is the material things and candle lit dinners overlooking city lights that make that extra enough into everybody's Valentine's Day celebration. However, we shouldn't forget that happiness that lingers is not something we can get out of line.

It lies in the brief moments of nervous silence, the stolen glances, the shy smiles, and the feeling that everything's going to be all right.

It is in the simplicity of a romantic moment that we gather the courage to express even the most complicated of feelings.

Love is priceless. Don't buy it. Mean it.

E-mail the author at vess_dacer@yahoo.com

Art of the manicure

MANICURE IS A FEMININE ART OF passage.

There was a time when nail polish was a mark of sophistication. Only women of the world painted their nails... stage and film celebrities and fashion icons.

The big no, grown-brother's time, good girls were not allowed to paint their nails. They weren't especially allowed to paint them red for they might be mistaken for women of dubious repute.

Today that stigma is gone. Even little girls now can paint their nails with non-toxic peel-off nail polish, just for the fun of it or to be just like mommy.

Red still nail polish comes in many different colors, not only in pinks and reds, but also in shades of purple, blue, yellow, and metallic green, gold and silver.

I have even tried a "mood" nail polish that changes color depending on your mood. In fact, it is a formula that is sensitive to your finger-tip temperature: blue if you are nervous with clammy fingertips, and pink when your hands are warm.

Asian ancient times, in both western and Asian cultures, long nails have been a symbol of wealth and status.

In the west, having long nails was a symbol of femininity. In many Asian countries, having long nails means that you don't engage in manual labor.

In ancient Chinese civilization, colors such as black, gold and red were reserved each only for royals.

To create the largest and warmest, the Chinese concocted inclusive from gum Arabic, egg whites, beer wax and gelatin.

The common folk had to content themselves with painting their nails pale colors. Those who defied this prohibition were put to death.

In Babylonia, people gave each other manicures and pedicures with solid gold tools.

Some archeologists argue that nail polish could be traced to ancient Egyptian civilization, where it was reserved exclusively for royalty.

Evidences of nail polish was found alongside eye makeup and perfumes. Red marked the highest rank of royalty. Cleopatra is reported to have painted her nails deep red whereas Queen Nefertiti opted for a fuchsia shade.

Self-expression

Today, nail art has developed into a form of self-expression with endless possibilities and fun. So country can beat Japan in nail art.

When I last visited Tokyo, the nail salons were booked close in advance, and the nail bars were always packed full.

Some procedures such as lengthening nail or nail nails or applying very complex patterns took more than three hours.

The color choices were very varied, and I marveled at all the designs available—from rainbows to marble.

I chose a nail design that had a black background with red rhinestones. Meanwhile my cousin had her nails painted in a mini black and white checkerboard.

Pampering

Painting one's nails is one of the simplest methods of self-pampering and making oneself feel beautiful.

When I need a little mood-enhancing, I paint my nails a bright shade of pink. If I want to feel summery, I go for sparkly cut red. When I want to feel extra cool and sophisticated, I choose a black lacquer.

Last Friday, for only little pocket money, I indulged in the ultimate in home nail experience.

I called up Totally Nailed, a home service nail salon. The spa attendant came in a taxi and cheery bright green outfit.

I started with a warm, bubbly foot bath. The attendant soaked my feet inside a portable foot spa that vibrated. It tickled a bit at first, but the warm, soothing fragrant water was extra invigorating.

Then, I had a peppermint foot scrub to exfoliate and soften my skin. The peppermint felt nice and tingly on my legs and the scrub made me feel very clean.

Afterward I had a foot massage with peppermint lotion to rehydrate my skin. It melted the tension from my long stressful day.

Foot massages, also known as reflexology, are very healing because each point to your foot is said to represent a corresponding body part. So your foot relaxes so does the rest of your body.

Next came my manicure where my cleanser set and filed my nails neatly and pressed my nails and array of colors to choose from, bold, classic red really makes a statement when her with short or long nails.

A bright color such as tomato-bell yellow or waffle light green is super fun and you can mix and match colors, too. French manicures are great if you want to look a little more elegant than usual. I opted for a no-frills, nude and red black.

Extra

I couldn't resist the extra treats offered by the home spa service. (They showed me a tempting menu of treatments to choose from.)

So my treatment ended with a soothing scalp massage, which employed an emollient and moisturizer-rich coconut hair mask.

With my hair silky smooth and my nails elegantly painted, I was relaxed and ready to face a fun and active weekend.

Totally Nailed offers specially priced kiddie foot spas (P550) and other treatments for children. It also offers spa party packages.

Nail fans, and artisans and professionals are available in Skin Food, located in most major malls.

Call Totally Nailed at (917) 5289116, (928) 4674252, 4722855.

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ENTERTAINMENT
Editor Ernesto G. Velarde

INSIDE
- Celebs talk about the best and worst parts of loving Dollywood /F1
- What it takes to win a slot in 'Pinoy Idol' competition /F6

Igorot filmmakers out to correct false image

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—CONTRARY TO WHAT MOST people think, the Igorots may not be playing in movie theaters here, but they are being produced and watched by video fanatics in the Cordillera.

Produced on a shoestring budget, these films are shown during community screenings and distributed online, or through local VCD and DVD shops, said Ruth Tindaan, an instructor at the College of Arts and Communication of the University of the Philippines Baguio, who studied the phenomenon.

In a paper she presented during the First International Conference on Cordillera Studies on Friday, Tindaan said these films represent a new generation's growing awareness of racial pride.

She said Igorot filmmakers are apparently using the craft to empower Cordillera heritage because of the poor and often false image that has been portrayed in mainstream films.

She cited portrayals in the 1954 film "Bagsic," "Nag-iisang Igorot" (1958), "Mumbaki" (1990), "Igorota, the Legend of the Tree of Life" (1994), "Ngayong Nandito Ka Na" (2004) and even the commercial hit "Tim's Gize Up On Liv" (2005).

'Exotic curiosity'

Popular actors play Igorots as the "uncivilized other" or as an "exotic curiosity," Tindaan noted. Their dialogues are sprinkled with "subpronounced vernacular phrases" to supply an element of authenticity to their performances, she added.

"These movies also use Igorot rituals as spectacular backdrops, no matter how alien to the actual film," she added.

Alunan Records and Indigenous Film
(CONTINUED ON A11)

AN ACROBAT from Cirque du Soleil performs in the spectacular production number "A Day in the Life" (from the Vegas musical, "Love") during a tribute to the Beatles at the 50th Annual Grammy Awards. More pictures on Page F5.

Rhian wanted 'Dyesebel'

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

RHIAN RAMOS HAS earlier screened as the next Dyesebel in GMA-7's forthcoming fantasy-series based on the Mars Ravelo komiks classic.

"I'm grossly overrated because I had grown my hair long and put on a fake tan," Rhian explained.

Though all signs now point to Marian Rivera as the Engkantadia network's next mermaid, Rhian remains undaunted.

Not enough

"I'm even willing to play Dyesebel's nemesis," she said. "People say I can play a villain well because I have a very strong personality."

According to a network insider, Rhian was not originally considered for the lead part, but lost it because she lacked the necessary curves. To be blunt about it, her breasts were not seen as ample enough.

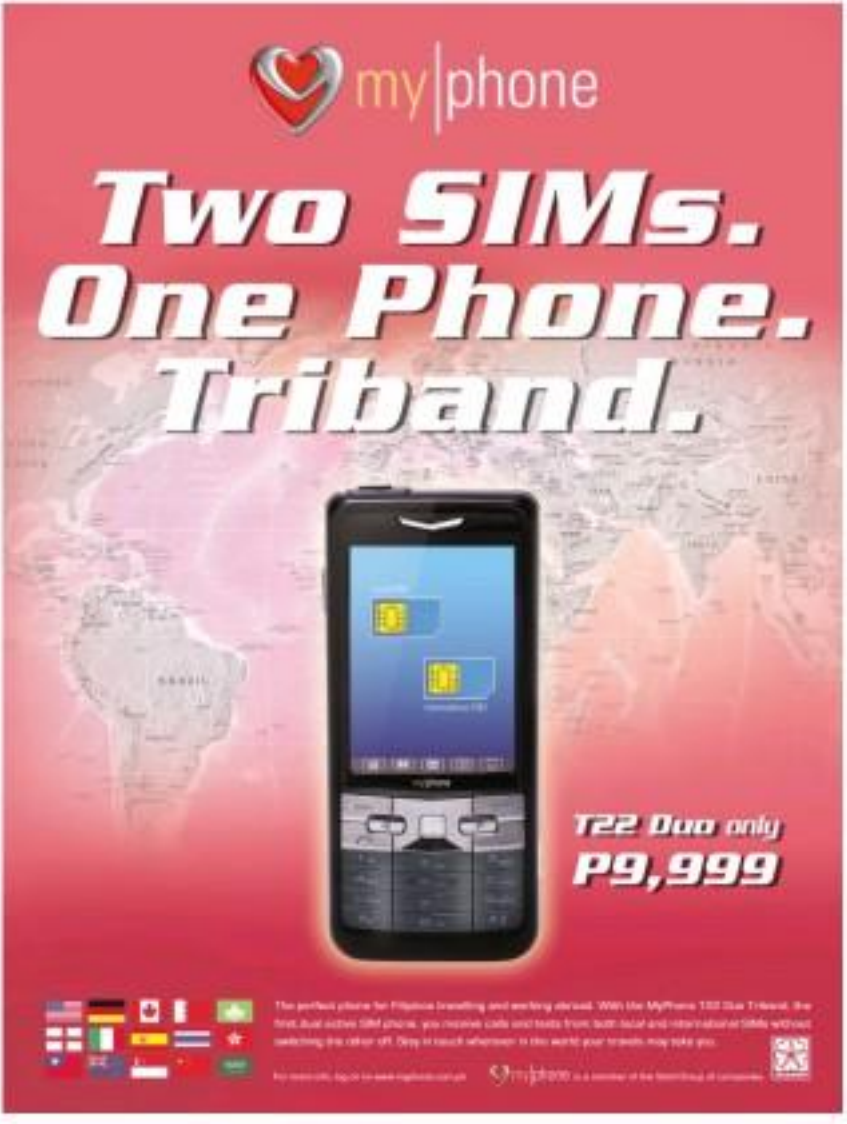
Rhian, who turns 18 this year, admits she may be too young to have that much-crossover soap-opera "I have plenty of time to develop," she joked.

Lessons

"In any case, I don't think the network would like a daring Dyesebel because kids will surely scorch the dress," she said.

If she were to do a mermaid movie, she'd like something

(CONTINUED ON A11)



AT THE CINEMAS

ROBINSONS GALLERIA 1	1 JUMPER	2 THE EYE	3	4
ROBINSONS GALLERIA 4	1	2 JUNO	3	THE EYE
	4 ENOVE	5 BUCKET LIST	6 JUMPER	7
GREENBELT 1	1 BUCKET LIST		2 JUMPER	
GREENBELT 2	1 27 DRESSES		2 JUMPER	
	3 JUNO	4 GOOD LUCK CHUCK	5 JUMPER	
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 JUMPER		2 THE EYE	
	3 JUNO	4	5 THE EYE	
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 JUMPER	2 THE EYE	3	4
MARIKINA MARIKITI	1 JUMPER		2 THE EYE	
	3	4 JUNO	5 JUMPER	
TRINOMA	1	2 GOOD LUCK CHUCK	3 27 DRESSES	4 THE EYE
	5 JUNO	6 BUCKET LIST	7 JUMPER	

AT THE MALLS

Ayala Malls

Greenbelt — Julia Fordham Live, February 15, 8pm, Greenbelt 3 Park

Alabang Town Center — Jazz Dinner Show featuring Activity Band, February 15, 8pm, Corte de las Palmas Veranda

Ayala Center Cebu — Julia Fordham Live, February 15/16 30pm, South Surface Parking area

Market! Market! — Venice Beach Volleyball Mall Tour, February 23, Activity Center

Onstage — Repertory Philippines presents HAMLET, February 1 to 17, 8PM. For reservations, pls. call 687-8710 or visit www.repertory-philippines.com

Ayala Museum — Museum of Philippine Art

Tsi Nonna — Serenades at Trinoma featuring Philippines' Madrigal Singers, Feb. 14, 8pm, Activity Center. Serenades at Trinoma featuring Richard Poon and Lorraine, Feb. 20, 8pm, Activity Center

Igorot . . .

From page E1

Productions are just two of the production outfits now engaged in the fledgling Igorot cinema industry, initiated in 1993 by filmmaker Sammy Dangalio Wenceslao Vibar Missions Timbreza said.

Many of the films are local dramas that set Christian values against age-old Cordillera practices.

"Most of the productions are narrative films about Igorot families whose ethnic traditions and values are set against Christian beliefs, influences of outsiders, trappings and trends of modern living and despite better living conditions," she said.

Four-member crew

Played by volunteer or minimally paid actors from local communities and recorded by a four-member crew, production work for these films proceed, with limited resources, "to convey an alternative vision of Igorot life."

Timbreza said films like "Sabong ni Gelo" and "Tanap" focus on real-time concerns in the Cordillera, among them how farmers labor to improve their families' lives.

Those movies feature ranges of small human loads from the usual of rural-based gadgets — bees, pots blackened from cooking over firewood and shots of family dinners daily lit to improved kerosene lamps, Timbreza said.

"These films run counter to the view of breathtaking sensations and are instead peopled with friendly folks in colorful ethnic dresses, which are the prevalent pictures of the Cordillera portrayed in commercial films and the tourism industry," she pointed out.

Technological advances like digital cameras and the Internet have helped young Igorot redefine the "authentic Igorot" image for their own purposes, industry, said Jimmy King, a UP Baguio communication and broadcasting professor who is pursuing his doctorate in Philippine studies.

Online support

Pang cited that online support generated by actor Mikky Cielo, a Mt. Province native, in the GMA-7 network's reality show "Starstruck."

Many Igorot bloggers started online campaigns to support actress like Cielo since they determine that the celebrity has Cordillera heritage, he said.

A few other outfits have made fleet area inroads in Igorot entertainment.

Filmmakers Gabriel Pumarok and Jose Bacaldo in world cinema for independent films that honor the indigenous Filipino.

Rhian . . .

From page E1

like the Hollywood bunny Rich Aquatic. "That was fun," she noted.

Rhian related that she had trained in a competition swimmer when she was younger. "But I never joined any competitive because I was shy."

This skill comes in handy when she joins celebrity contests, though. "For a friend and showbiz competition, I win. On one who drew for the swimsuit chest, and because all my swimsuits had inflated in."

Another kind

She did another kind of diving in the afternoon soap "My Only Love" — as actress who's seen under Marilyn Reyes shaded her head in a toilet bowl and then spit back.

"The staff made sure the bowl and basin were clean," she reassured.

She's willing to go to great lengths for her work, confessed her regular photographer Jay Tabuena.

For a shoot that involved tying her up with red ribbons, Rhian had to wait for three hours for the crew to "free the crystal tube and lowered down seamless," recalled Jay.

Jay also took Rhian's photo for the Bobcat billboard which shows her in a bikini.

'Cloverfield': The beast that burdens

By Oliver H. Palanteath
Contributor

AFTER MONTHS OF SPECULATION AND varied opinions over its teaser trailer, the enigmatically titled "Cloverfield" finally reveals itself. It's a grand, spectacular travelling that doesn't lose sight of its human component amidst the chaos. The marketing of guerrilla works incredibly well for the monster movie-disaster flick, a brainchild of producer J.J. Abrams ("Lost," "Alias") and directed by trusted collaborator Matt Reeves (co-creator of "Felicity"). Inspired by the old Japanese monster icon Godzilla, that gigantic creature suddenly wreaks havoc in New York.

Viewed from the perspective of Hud (T.J. Miller), an amateur cameraman, the visuals are mostly shaky and reminiscent of "Blair Witch Project." He is assigned to video footage of a surprise party for his friend, Rob (Michael Stahl-David), who's leaving for Japan soon. In the middle of the revelries, a young woman, followed by a huge explosion, sends everyone into a panic. The strange change of atmosphere and the frenzy thereafter easily evoke the first film during terrorist attacks in the city proper back on a typically brisk mid.

Written by Drew Goddard ("Buffy," "Angel," "Alias"), the movie firmly establishes its characters early on. His people are naturally chatty, but the script is able to separate personalities from the get go. The characters may seem dumb at first when they decide to rescue Rob's dear friend Beth (Odette Yustman), who's trapped elsewhere. But given the clear connections drawn before things went to hell, one understand and root for them soon enough.

Hidden clues

As with "Blair Witch," you'll keep your eyes peeled for hidden clues or details in the images first are caught by the camcorder. "Cloverfield" is able to explore that as a useful storytelling technique. Because not all the answers are clearly expressed, you have to pay attention to flashbacks, cleverly shown as footage that's accidentally taped over.

Some of the character's lines seem like throwaway bits but they actually make sense of the whole campaign. And those who may have lost patience with long, stimulated segments in Abrams' TV shows will be glad that some things are disclosed soon, at least.

Official online information and production notes on planting the film's actors are a welcome addendum to this intimate, raw.

Very imposing

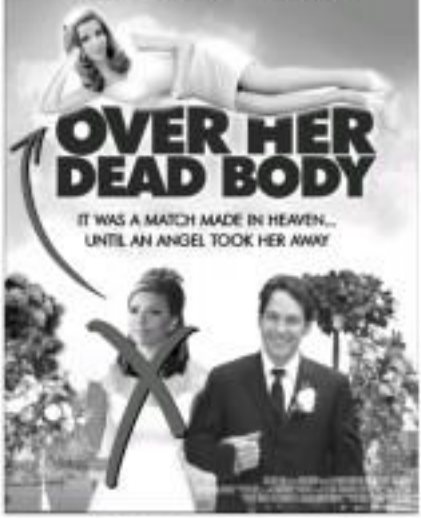
The creature's head strangely looks like the Statue of Liberty from "Return of the Jedi," but it's still very imposing. Seemingly a combination of reptilian and mammalian body parts, it's a frightening creature to behold. More monsters slowly command such awe and fear, but this one does so almost instantly.

"Cloverfield," like the first "Jurassic Park," succeeds in creating memorable moments in the form of effects-enhanced bounty forces of nature (unlike the sad American version of "Godzilla"). Shorter than the usual horror-monster indie flick, it's able to sustain and iron around potentially monotonous situations, while superbly constructing each to viewers viscerally and emotionally. If it spawns a sequel, let's just cross our fingers that it's as inventive.

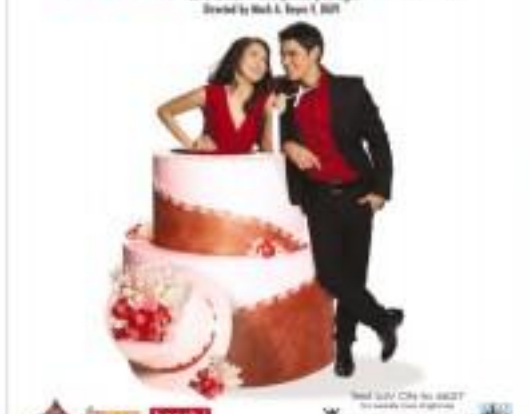
8 ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATIONS
BEST PICTURE
BEST DIRECTOR / BEST ACTOR

WATCH IT EXCLUSIVELY AT
Greenbelt CINEPLEX 10
OPENS TODAY | MTRCB RATING: R-13

OPENS FEBRUARY 20
THE DESPERATE HOUSEWIFE IS NOW A DESPERATE GHOST
IN THE YEAR'S MOST HILARIOUS ROMANTIC COMEDY
EVA LONGORIA PARKER
PAUL RUDD · LIZA BELL · JASON BIGGS



THE PERFECT MATCH
THIS VALENTINE SEASON!
RICHARD Gutierrez MARIAN Rivera
My Bestfriend's Girlfriend
Love comes in unexpected packages



NOW SHOWING

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SHE'S AN AMERICAN IDOL!

PLAYING EVERYWHERE WHERE TEENS HANGOUT!

ENTERTAINMENT

PHOTOS left, Bianca Gonzalez, Jed Madela and Marvin Agustin

Celebs' thoughts on love

V-DAY GIVES US AN EXCUSE to be crazy. So pardon my month as I share with you my long, "Heart Under Renovation" and some celebs' thoughts on what they have said love about. Famous—plus their unforgettable love experiences.

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

'Heart Under Renovation'

"My heart is not there. Not that I lack significant others. I'm just having one of those blah days when my heart just refuses to feel too much all over again. As I told my best friend Jen, 'Girl, feelin' gotta'll? Parang pagod na akong magpakatanga. Di ba sa isa lang nagiging? But reply struck me. 'Be be jinged, girl. Label ka lang. Sa dami ng pinagdaanan mo sa love, di na sa akin lang sya ang senaryo at sitwasyong hindi.

"So to my heart: just tired of going through the whole gamut of emotions or has it become so afraid of what it wants the most? They say love is the answer. How it's the question.

"Considering all the emotional investment I've wisely (and carelessly) made many installments and heartaches ago, my heart feels like it's on the brink of bankruptcy. Is there any heart out there that's wealthy enough to be a safety deposit box of all my leftover dreams and desires?

"I've been through hell and back in the name of love. Now, my heart is in limbo. How long before I get to Paradise?"

Losing it

Heather Ocampo: "I hate loving too much and losing my sanity in the process. But what the heck? There's the essence of loving, be whether it's gonna hurt or not, at least I've loved. Marrying **Kristine** (Bermas) was my most unforgettable love experience."

Bianca Gonzalez: "The worst and best thing about love for me is how it is my greatest weakness but it's also where I draw my greatest strength from. I mean my first I have yet to experience the greatest thing about love and that's having my own family someday."

Jed Madela: "I hate love because it makes me forget myself. I tried to give me all and have nothing left for me. What I love about love is that it always finds a way to paint a smile on my face. I cooked lunch for someone and I enjoyed watch-

(SEE P. 11)

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Vivian Margaret (Vivian Hsu) is not your usual teenager.

Smart & sharp-tongued, she stands out from the usual high school crowd.

But after being faced with an unexpected pregnancy by her unbearable Hunks (Michael Cera), she enlists the aid of her best-friend (Olivia Thirlby) in finding the perfect child a "perfect" set of parents: an affluent, yuppie-ish couple - Mark & Vanessa Loren (Jason Bateman & Jennifer Garner), ranging to adopt.

Through the finest times through the worst times, Vivian Hsu's life with adulthood and unhealthy figures will never be the same.

NOW SHOWING

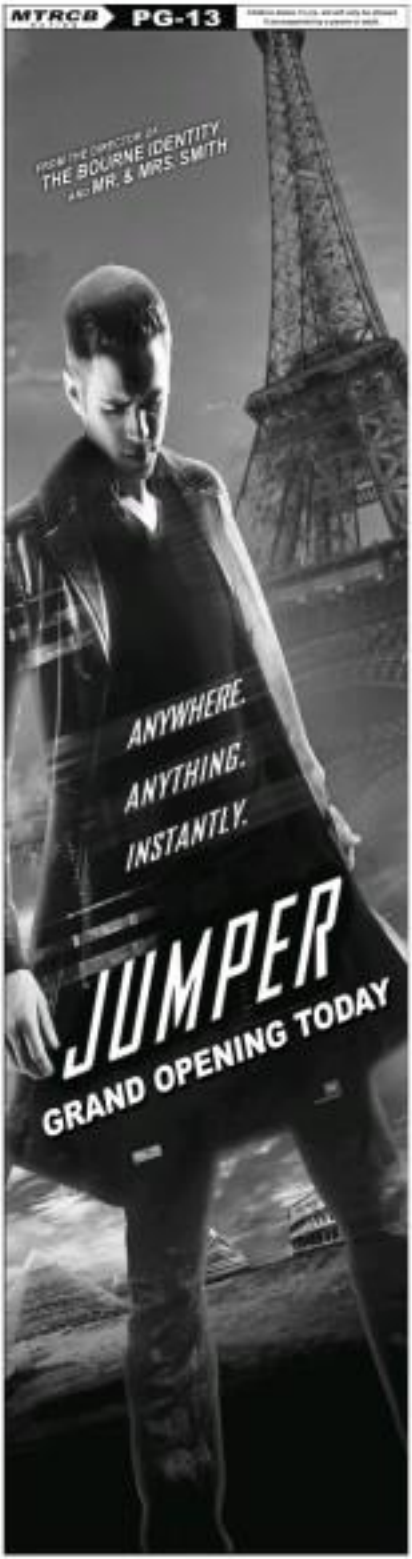
METRO MANILA

IMAX

THE PODIUM

LUZON

VISAYAS - MINDANAO



'Endo' director says contractual workers' plight is very real to him

TAKE FIVE

Indie filmmaker Jade Castro

By Marinel R. Cruz

JUST LIKE THE CHARACTERS of the indie film "Endo," which he wrote and directed, Jade Castro knows only too well the uncertainties of being a contractual worker.

"I've always been a contractual worker in the entertainment industry. I've never been a regular employee. I just wait for the next project," Castro told Inquirer Entertainment. "That's how I could relate to the situation of my friends after one—or more—jobs contractual workers in the service sector, and to the Filipino laborers I met during a stint in Taiwan. That's how the inspiration for 'Endo' came to me."

"Endo" is slang for "End of Contract," or what contractual workers call their last day of work. The movie tells the story of Leo, who hops from one job to the next.

His relationships with women are similarly fleeting, but when he meets the spirited dreamer Irene, he is suddenly faced with the promise of a better future. But he doesn't seem prepared to handle it.

Castro pointed out that his film has two main issues: love/relationship and work. "There's more," Castro stressed, "but they're hard to separate because they're intertwined. I've always imagined 'Endo' to be a character study first. Leo is in this particular situation in life, with three characters train, and one affects the other."

Jason Abalos plays the role of Leo. Isa Feliciano, daughter of actor Johnny Delgado and filmmaker Lawrence Guillen, portrays Irene.

"Endo," voted 'K' by the Cinema Evaluation Board, took home the Grand Jury Prize at last year's Cinemalaya Philippine Independent Film Festival. It also won her first Best Actress trophy and JD Domingo his best Editor award for this film.

Did Jason and Isa audition for the roles? How long did you shoot? Can you share some interesting anecdotes that happened while filming?

They both auditioned. Jason was the very first actor on set for when we were thinking of who could play Leo. After many auditions with many actors, we still picked him. "Isa auditioned as the CCP during the mass casting call for all Cinemalaya movies. I immediately liked her, and liked her even more when I reviewed the tapes. We also had an audition for our top choices to run their chemistry. We shot the movie for 12 days spread over three months.

A director whose film was also shown during the Cinemalaya film fest said he was close to quitting due to lack of funds. Did that happen to your production? How did you manage?

I don't know how we managed. Most of the funds came from UFO Pictures' account, a little of the earnings left from 'Ang Pagbabalaga Ni Maximo Oliveros,' which were not much to begin with. But it helped us get by somewhat. Also the Cinemalaya trancha came late, but the budget was very tight, with most of [illegible] for locations and close to none for equipment. We did want to pay staff and crew fairly so that was the bulk of the budget. Michelin Yumatovo and Mell Pacquiao, the main producers for 'Endo,' did an amazing job.

What's next for 'Endo'? Any international festivals?

What's next for me? Hopefully, a project that I can call my own. I've been writing a lot of scripts, but I'm not sure which one will be the next. I'm currently directing a movie for Star Cinema called "My Big Love," starring Sam Concepcion, Sam Milby, and Kristine Hermosa. I have several dream movies.

Who among the local actors do you wish to work with? Why?

No one in particular, but it would be great to work with living legends.

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METRO EAST

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STA. ROSA

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2 JUMPER
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LIPA

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3 JUMPER
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DASMARIÑAS

1 MY BEST FRIEND's GIRLFRIEND
2 JUMPER
3 ALIENS vs. PREDATOR 2
4 SAW IV

IMUS

1 MY BEST FRIEND's GIRLFRIEND
2 JUMPER
3 ALIENS vs. PREDATOR 2
4 THE EYE

ANGELES

1 MY BEST FRIEND's GIRLFRIEND
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TARLAC

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STARMILLS

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BACOLOD

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3 SAW IV
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ILOILO

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5 ALVIN and the CHIPMUNKS
6 MY BROTHER'S WIFE

Celebs' thoughts...

from page E1

ing has not it all up. Abilative lang har it will mend me in my misery."

Prudence Isaac: "What I have about love is when we put our matters a month or but I've just get to give him another chance. The thing I like most about love is when I feel taken good care of and when I feel safe in his arms. What I can't forget is the time when my life (turned) to change when I left Sherwin our 5th anniversary. Bitaded' because he gave me all-out love."

Michelle Marie Chua Pardo: "The best thing about love is that it is a powerful force that can really change lives. The thing that make about love is when it makes you lose control of yourself. The high point of love for me is when it inspires me to write great songs for my band."

Cheska Garcia: "I don't hate anything about love no matter how many times I have cried or thrown it all. There is always somebody destined for me and that's why I love to love. Dong's prepared to me was my ultimate love song."

Christian Ramirez: "What I hate about love is also what I love about it and that is its being a power that I can never control. My love for God beats all the loves combined."

Tin-Tin Acosta Bahan: "I hate the sleepless nights and pain that go with love. I love the unreasonable joy that reaches the very core of my being and the assurance that I'll never be alone. My wedding was the most beautiful experience I ever had."

Ybong Navarro: "I hate love last engaging kaya naw pantasan mo na! I like love last engaging inspired ako si lalot ng happy.

Charry Pie Fernandez: "There's really nothing I can hate about love because for me it's perfect and the greatest gift from God. If only people could truly love with a pure heart then the world would be a better place. My greatest love experience was when I gave birth to my son. Because of him, I know that unconditional love exists."

Marvin Agustin: "Love drives the same degrees of insane pain. It gets me crazy and makes me do anything and everything for the one I love. Love can bring out the best in me and it may even at the same time. What makes love beautiful is its unpredictability. Today, probably would be my date and only blind date. I have blind dates but after that night, we ended up seeing each other for almost a year."

Solina Magdangal: "I hate it when I think I already have everything I need to know about my BF (my there's a lot more I uncover). I like how love adds meaning to everything I do. I cherish the time when long distance relationship just (one) is being, say date (a) in (through) web cam."

Alfred Vargas: "I hate the inevitable hurt that love brings, sometimes but I know it's all for the good in the long run. I love the purpose it brings to my life and how it transcends everything. I'll never hate love — wishful, sincere and passionate!"

E-mail wearing *Inbox/Sight to the editor@inq7.net.*

PHILSTAR Lens

OPENS FEBRUARY 20

THE WORLD IS POSSESSED BY THE EVIL OF MEN

Ringo: It's a pity Amy isn't here

By the Inquirer.net Inquirer.net Entertainment staff

OVERHEARD AT THE 51ST ANNUAL Grammy Awards, compiled by The Associated Press:

• "It's a pity Amy isn't here, but oh well, God bless her." – Ringo Starr on Grammy winner Amy Winehouse, who couldn't obtain a visa in time to attend the show.

• "So many of you know, I first started singing when Lincoln was president." – Cher, 61.

• Frank Sinatra looked good for 13th child's 51st? – Prince, after Gina, his opponent in archival backup in a duet with Michael Jackson.

• "There four men made music that changed the history of our planet." – Tom Hanks, introducing a tribute to the Beatles.

• "I'm so glad Kanye [West] won everything because you know how cranky he gets when he loses." – Paul Rosenberg, after it was revealed West had won three Grammys in the non-televised part of the awards show.

• "He couldn't keep me from actually getting this myself ... it's not the same when someone else gets it on your behalf." – Carrie Underwood, who raised outrage to accept her trophy for Best Female Country Vocal Performance.

• "Where are those writers?" – Ryan Seacrest, stumbling through his teleprompter script.

Top of the talk shows

For those who missed the TV gabfests last week. (And why are we not surprised.)

• Nadine: In answer to an ad duped spot with Isabel. Oh over dem. ngayuon space.

• Nikki: nung problema ngayun kung mas mapuputukhina more."

• Isabel on the alleged rape with Sinding: "Nikki sinisisang sinungaling pangyan. Mukha ko alam kung bakit kinukuha 'yong ganyan kasi kinukuhanan and kinikuha Mang-ing Akin ko [sensing!], parang gumawa ng pa-sino kaming artista and same kaming Aaron Lozon, ginagawang tawag ng ibang tao." (Hindi. Alam mo naman pala.)

RAQUEL DE

ISABEL DE

Who needs men?

Nikki Misa

• Iwa Moto on her breakup with her non-show bid boyfriend:

"Hindi kailangan ng love life para mag-day manaya. Wala, gusto mong. Maayos naman ako ngunsing hindi. Bakit kailangan ko ng kasama ng gagala at ako ang [Pausing. Mike yata, ano?]

• Hilda Koronel on Jennylyn Mercado's weird tour with Jessica Cerayola:

"Siniyasat ako and ayaw pumayag pasap ko. Ito na nga-handle niya nung mayaya. Ang-gusto kasi [nung ginawa niya na ... nag-apologize ako] at nga nung nangyaya... nag-awide.

No regrets

• Sharon on getting pregnant with Gian Magdangal's child:

"Siguro nga adultress, pero wala kaming regrets."

• Gian on how Sharon's pregnancy might affect his growing fan base:

"Nung-dumating ito at buhay ko, nung-ka-kasal [nung relationship namin and whatever it will be going on] [my] responsibilities now that I have a son. Di ko mana-isip [yung fans. (Good boy.)

• Carlene Aguilar on making peace with Dennis Trillo over-on Callie:

"Siguro na naman. Hindi na namin pinag-usapan [yung mga-dating nangyari. Importante lang yung ngayon and hindi para-maghiwa-ng-pware of mutual-learning dalawa and lahat ng tao na-may-pakpak naman." (Good girl.)

RUSHES

No commitment

• Alec Mekwalter, asked if she has a commitment with Patrick Meinrenn:

"Hey'll never really know what's gonna happen. If things will happen, they will happen. Kahit na-nung-magsasama, magsapaan't-magsapaan [sin. Basta gusto ko lang i-enjoy [yung company niya and maintindihan naman akong mag-e-enjoy ako rin sa company ko. Kung magkakaroon-ka-ng-relasyon, only time can tell." (Parang ik-ano nito, ano?)

• Patrick, asked if he's affected by the intrigue:

"Hindi. Mam ko-ng-mas-mapalo siya-ko."

• Lolit Solis, on "rumoring" her story about Pete Pascual and Iwa Moto:

"Kasi nga kagi nilang sinasabi, ramuot si Lolit, dapat nag-apologize. Bipos, pag-nanasaktan mo-ang-tao, kailangang ang-humingi-ng-tawad. Hindi-Hindi ako. Kasi, dito sa-akin-nila-i-narating pag-nagpatawad ako, nag-apologize. Mag-apologize ako-dahil Eto na-ng-sinasabi ko [sin nasaktan-ko-ako. Bitter] will never-retract. Siguro-para na-lang-siya-ang-mangaso-ang-isdan, hindi-ako-makinig-sa-pagsasabi-dito, nothing-else-mag-ano-pa. (Ang-tawag-dyan, hindi ko-sigurado-ito." (Ang-tawag-dyan, hindi ko-sigurado-ito.)

Big breakup

• Jennylyn Mercado on Patrick Garcia:

"Actually-wala-na-po-kaming-communication. Hindi-naman-kami-naghihiwalayan-na. Nandyan-ang-mga-text-messages-pero-hindi-pagkikita-ng-magkasama. Pero-kung-kailangan-ako-nandyan-ako-pa-rin. Kung-kailangan-ako-ng-tulong-nandyan-para-sa-akin. Siguro-ang-isang-dahilan-kung-bakit-kami-naghiwalay-ay-dahil-sa-pagkakaroon-ng-ibang-buhay. Kaya-siguro-ang-isa-sa

Voice, looks and a good story win 'Idol' slots

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
(Candidate)

CEBU CITY—ONE THING that the production staff of GMA 7's "Pinoy Idol" has confirmed after four weeks of auditions all over the country: Filipinos are among the most respectful people in the world.

Even after enduring a barrage of outside comments from the judges—specifically Wyngard Tracy—almost all of the rejected aspirants would invariably end the encounter with a smile and a "*Salamat po*" or "Thank you ma'am/sir."

This observation was related to business entertainment by Tracy himself, as well as Rory Lantajan, executive producer of the local version of the world-famous reality talent contest.

Tracy noted, "I'm American Idol," are often not the reject's cue to, or vanish, the judges. That has not happened to us . . . so far," Lantajan says the fourth stop.

Not that they'd have dodging it.

Fishing for talents

Lantajan, who is part of a pre-casting team, related that...at their level, the screeners would inconsistently provoke contestants to throw a tantrum—to elicit some interesting footage. Still, the common refrain would be, "Maraming salamat po."

Lantajan admitted that they had all but given up trying to find pugnacious or at least, temperamental contestants. "That would certainly make good TV but I suppose Pinoys are just not like that. We're famous by nature."

Which doesn't mean there's a dearth in drama.

Lantajan related, for instance, that one female contestant from Iloilo, instead of voyeuring, had booked creditors upon being told that she had made it to the Manila round, one step away from the final list.

"Inward ani, she didn't have money to go to Manila," Lantajan said. "She cheered up only when we said the show would shoulder all her travel and lodging expenses."

True stories

Sordidness to say, sob stories abounded.

"At least 50 percent of the aspirants said they were trying their luck at this because they'd like to help their families financially," said Lantajan.

Program manager Hazel Mamita has coined a two-minute rule of auspicious: "There's this girl who said she had traveled 14 hours to get to the Cagayan de Oro tryout. And this other girl who said she learned of the auditions from watching TV at a neighbor's house."

Mamita explained, the eyes did background checks and found the stories to be factual. However, only the second girl made it through; the first one was told to take the 14-hour journey back to where she had come from. Mamita added, "And the girl who watched TV at the neighbor's' bit found out that her house was in the middle of a rice field, and the nearest neighbor was really far."

To the top

Voice, looks and a good story is one judging could jumped-on aspirant to the top of the heap, it seemed.

Mamita explained, "From the American Idol' experience, it's the individual stories (that keep viewers) glued to the show."

Well, the Cebu tryouts were rife with individual tales—happy as well as sad, or just plain wacky.

Hazzah Mercaderes's trip to Cebu was subsidized by the local government to her Leyte hometown. There were 34 of them, she told listeners. "One mayor gave me P5,000 for the boat ride and food expenses." Hazzah, a whiff of a girl who never lets curly hang butt in old-fashioned curls, got a good "rocker" and the judges' cheers fell sotto off. "You're going to Hollywood!" Dis Al, that would be, "We're going to Hollywood!"

An eye-catching male contestant, Warren Domantel, came dressed like his idol April Boy Regino, down to the baseball cap. He had long hair, too. He worked as supervisor of a packing plant in Bacolod but "Bulong ng Damdamin." Like Hanna, he's going to Manila.

Boobs's ex!

Ryan Yan, who said he was the ex-boyfriend of Timelight-hogging starlet Ethel Booba and Mahal, told the contest crew that he had joined up on their his long last Ticket would, hopefully, see him on television and maybe want to meet him. He's one round closer to his goal.

Quite characteristically, Yanes entertained their crew the most heart-wrenching story should come with genuine talents. At this point, to his look, only one contestant has fit the bill.

Singing "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," a blind girl from Iloilo had endeared "every one" to tears, including Tracy, who has invariably been rated as nasty. Simon Cowell, and who scoreered the tandem in detail: "Opie (Amanil, also a judge) was the first to break down, as early as the second line. Then, Jolina (Magdangal, chair) in the past. (Cooperly sobbed. I looked around and saw that even this camera man was crying. I tried to stop my own tears from falling, by looking up."

He failed, and the moments has been recorded for posterity "I received, belatedly, that a camera was focused on me, just weeping," Tracy said.

Isolated outburst

In an isolated incident on the second day of the Cebu tryouts, a contestant from Leyte cursed the judges. "But not in my presence," Tracy said. "And it happened in front of us, I'd have probably just laughed."

On "American Idol," there are listeners in the room with the judges. Tracy said, "[Production holder] Fernando didn't believe it when told that there was no need for security personnel here in the Philippines."

There are three more auditions—in Davao, Manila and Zamboanga—before the final qualifying rounds on Feb. 21. "Pinoy Idol" starts airing in April and winds up in August.

And no matter how each aspirant fares in the tryouts, almost every encounter with the judges ends in a smile and a 'thank you po'

GOB ELCANO, Julius Magdangal and Wyngard Tracy are the judges in GMA 7's "Pinoy Idol. One contestant, a blind girl from Iloilo, made them cry, says Tracy.

SOME PRODUCTS of the fourth call for tryouts, held in the Queen City (contestants below from left): Warren Domantel, Fernando Rose Arroja, Sariah Jade Pedigna, Hannah Mercaderes and Frances Leandro Villanueva.

SHOW host Raymond Gutierrez, with a "gold ticket" winner

Opening Today

Selda

Stars Ida Lucero, Ara Mina, Emilio Garcia, Michael de Mesa, Allan Paule

Directed by Paulo Villaluna and Elkan Baguio

After a harrowing imprisonment, an ex-convict (Lucero) returns to the family's changed state. When a former inmate (Garcia) visits, their "bond" is rekindled. Graded B by the Cinema Evaluation Board (CEB), this drama touches the same sentimental notions behind "Bagets" or "The Cell-commander-by-virtue-of-relation ... The girlishness of the jail and music scenes are captured eloquently." Exclusively in Indelible Robinsons Galleria and Cinema.

Endo

Stars James Madio, Ina Feleo, Alchris Galura, Ricky Davao

Directed by Jade Castro

Leo (Madio) is a commercial worker who has gotten used to his "temporary" existence—until he meets seldom "temp" Grace (Feleo), a source of permanence and a job ahead. Castro's directorial debut won Dino Scouts in last year's Cinemalaya. Grand Jury Prize, Best Editing and Actress. Cinemalaya jurors cited its "subtle and riveting rendering of a love story." Graded A by the CEB, it was screened at the National Theatre Commission.

My Best Friend's Girlfriend

Stars Richard Gutierrez, Marian Rivera, Dina Bonnevie, JC de Vera, Pauleen Luna, LJ Reyes

Directed by Mark Reyes

Steamboat (Gutierrez) strikes his best buddy's girl (Rivera) in studio but on Madrigal's podium. The plan backfires when he falls for his pals sweetheart. Director Reyes notes that his lead stars regard this romantic-comedy as "a refresh-

ing break from their dramatic venues on 'Marimar' and 'Kamandag.' Producers Regal and GMA Films are betting on this new tandem to beat Onhwa's perennial Love Day outings with Angel Locsin.

June

Stars Allen Page, Michael Ortiz, Aristotle Garner, Jason Eastman

Directed by Jason Paulman

A urbap amateur actor (Page) gets knocked up by his geeky classmate (Ortiz). Unruffled, she finds a suburban couple to adopt her unborn baby. It's then of Boston bloke Garner (but it has "dialogue like a rapper rants and performances like grace notes," David Denby of New Yorker calls it "a coming-of-age movie made with eleven-year-olds." Carina Chocano of Los Angeles Times describes it as "hilarious, sweet-tempered ... a gust of fresh air."

There Will Be Blood

Stars Daniel Day-Lewis, Mary Elizabeth Barnell, Paul Dano, Dillon Brosnier

Directed by Paul Thomas Anderson

Loosely based on the early pages of Upton Sinclair's "Oil!," this epic marks the rise of an ambitious oil tycoon (Day-Lewis). Absolute Dargis of New York Times hails it as "an American nightmare ... lacking fire and brimstone." Manjoo-monger of The Movie Chronicle proclaims, "It's one a movie that disappears quietly." David Ansen of Newsweek says it's an "uncompromising portrait of egoism and greed."

Juniper

Stars Rupchen Cheremans, Samuel L. Jackson, Jamie Bell, Diane Lane, Rachel Bilson

Directed by Doug Liman

Based on a Steven Gould novel, this flick recounts the adventures of a guy (Cheremans) who discovers that he has the power to teleport himself anywhere. James Dibkley of Sci-Fi Movie Page predicts, "It promises to be a solid James Stewart-style actioner. Colman directed the fine "Bourne Identity"). "Judson Tyler

of Cinemablend.com opines: "Cheremans would certainly save a life ... he's on the verge of becoming another Mark Ruffalo."

The Spiderwick Chronicles

Stars Freddie Highmore, Mary-Louise Parker, David Strathairn, Joan Plowright, Nick Nolte, Martin Short

Directed by Mark S. Waters

This big-screen version of a popular children's book follows the Grace family after they move into the mysterious estate owned by a great, great uncle. Nancy Rich of Cinemablend.com continues "A classic adventure with its heart and its sense of whimsy in all the right places." Comments James Dibkley of Sci-Fi Movie Page: "The quest for the new Harry Potter' or 'Chronicles of Narnia' continues [with this fantasy adventure]."

Veteran stars in strong comeback vehicles

LAST YEAR, WE urged acting greats Nora Aunor and Vilma Santos to go out of their way to earn awards recognition in 2008. Well, Vilma has just made our day by agreeing to star in the indie movie "Independencia."

What about Nora? She's asked us to look for a good script for her, so hope springs that our call also be among her on this big screen icon, after an absence of too many years.

While we're at it, and with our final wishes addressed as well, let's add to our list of cinematic destitute and hope as well that the similarly gifted and underused Isabel Rivas of Christine Bersabe, Antoni Pi-ero, Leanne Guillen, Gino Gnaz-Ilagan, Ricky Davao, Mavic O'Hara, Jeremy Marquez, Charee Santos, Johnny Delgado, Tita Muñoz and Nikki Bacolod will also play significant roles in movies this year.

The emphasis is on significant, because many of our best thespians' abilities are wasted on bland, small or gargoyled roles they are forced to play.

Playing support

This, by the way is particularly disheartening to see on television, which often makes even our best actors look relentless. Even more dispiritingly they are reduced to playing support to vapid young stars who aren't yet their way out of a paper bag.

Incidentally, another veteran star—and natural-entering actor—who's announced his return to the movies is—Joseph Estrada! Yes, the former president is back to doing what he does best, aiming to a 2008 action-comedy production, with Ai Ai de las Alas.

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

Alas for his leading lady band comic re-Jeff!)

Having written quite a number of scripts for Jeng, we can vouch for his acting ability. He hopes, therefore, that his comeback movie would be done completely in a little diversion or tongue-in-cheek production. But will include some scenes which he can remind everyone that, yes, after the right camera, he's one of the best actors we have. Remember "Imelda Bandoz, Ang Batang Quapo?"

New films on view

"Manage Filet" finds a gifted stellar cast to add acting muscle to its search for the theater souls behind the monstrous attempts on the presidency of the true-of-Santos bungling in-saving the proletariat—of Manuel Wheatley Williams Noel, Dennis Quaid, Matthew Fox and Sigourney Weaver in one movie! A should-see movie! Isn't it?

"There Will Be Blood" is figuring strongly in film-award circles, so try to catch it on its limit run. Starring Daniel Day-Lewis in his searing portrayal of a self-made oil tycoon, the period film will be shown exclusively at Gateway Cineplex 10 starting Feb. 13.

Scrutinized for eight Oscar awards including Best Picture, Director and Actor, "There Will Be Blood" is a sprawling epic about family, faith and power set against the racial frontier of California's turn-of-the-century petroleum boom.

"The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford" features two strong portrayals—by Brad Pitt as Jesse James and Casey Affleck as Ford, the ultimate fan whose hero-worship has gone sour.

Landmark project

Has the film a more than just a tragic take on celebrity. As Al. Buck points out, "It's also about ambition and regret, life and death." For Bert Mc-Gurk's teenager's point-of-view, this film is a landmark production because it validates him as a Thespian and star, and has led to his being nominated in Best Supporting Actor in this month's Oscars.

"The Bucket List" pits veteran actors Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman against each other in a story about living life to the fullest in your sunset years.

Nicholson and Freeman play old men who meet in a hospital room—and decide to spend the time left doing everything they wanted to do before they "kick the bucket."

NOW SHOWING

THE WORLD IS IN CHAOS
Is it the WRATH of GOD
or the WORK of the DEVIL?

GOD DIDN'T WARN US

THE MIST

MASTER STORYTELLER STEPHEN KING
UNLEASHES THE CREATURES FROM HELL

OPENS TODAY

"A GEM OF A DARING WORK!"
—Inquirer.net

"POWERFUL AND DISTURBING"
—Philippine Star

"ONE OF THE MORE COMPELLING MOVIES RELEASED OF LATE... A BUBBLING TRIANGLE BREWS WITH DEADLY SEXUAL TENSION"
—Philippine Star

SELDA

exclusive on INDIESINE Galleria!

OPENS FEBRUARY 20

2 OSCAR® NOMINATIONS
Best Supporting Actor - Casey Affleck
Best Cinematography

"A MASTERWORK!"

BRAD PITT CASEY AFFLECK
THE ASSASSINATION OF JESSE JAMES BY THE COWARD ROBERT FORD

MTRCB PG-13

'WAG KANG TATAKBO.
'WAG KANG SISIGAW.
'WAG KANG KUKURAP!

JESSICA ALBA
THE EYE
YOU BLINK. YOU DIE.
IN CINEMAS EVERYWHERE

ARE YOU AFRAID OF THE DARK?
THE ONLY THING MORE TERRIFYING THAN BEING ALONE IS DISCOVERING THAT YOU'RE NOT.

P2

A NEW LEVEL OF FEAR

IN CINEMAS FEBRUARY 20

Noel Tio of Lumad; 46

By Pocholo Concepcion

NOEL TIO, 1958-2008, first drummer of Rony Ayala's band, Sexy Bisaya Lumad, died Monday in Baguio City after suffering a stroke. He was 46.

Drums for his

Boyfriend drummer and brothers. Tio was among the pioneers who blazed the trail for Filipino ethnic music in the 1980s.

He was out with friends on Saturday and was rushed early the next morning to Baguio General Hospital, according to cousin Ed Ramon Jimenez. Doctors performed brain surgery and Tio was put on a respirator. He died last week.

Ayala, who happened to be in Baguio for a concert, had stayed with his wife Jennie to see Tio in the hospital. "He died smiling," said Ayala.

Tio, bassist Dan Berlang and female vocalist Bayang Barrios were part of the Bagong Lumad lineup that recorded its epoch-first independent album, "Mga Awit ng Timod-lupa." The same band would re-record Ayala's earlier works, "Dangguay ng Dumpit" and "Magdalena," which, along with "Timod-lupa" and "Lumad sa Siyudad," were all acquired by Universal Records for nationwide release in 1991.

A wake is being held until Feb. 16 at La Pastora in Pilar, 79 Irisjulian Road, Baguio City. Interment will be at Heaven's Garden, Loakan Airport Road near the Philippine Military Academy campus.

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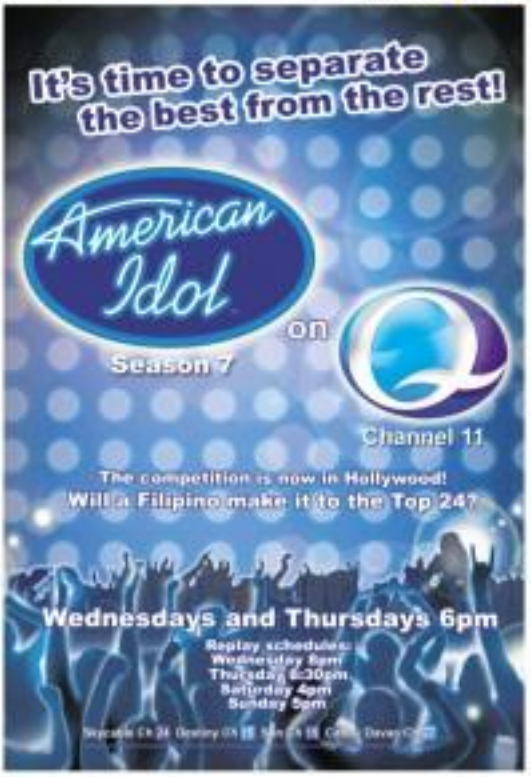

Therapy with Lorraine Bracco

"RETTUCE is the script, read for meat."

By Oliver M. Palomboni
Contributor

LORRAINE BRACCO SERVES "THE SOPRANOS" closely.

In the gripping series—an unpredictable and satirical channeling of a modern-day Mafioso family's daily dealings (which concluded a few months ago after six seasons)—the actress plays beleaguered psychiatrist Jennifer Melfi, whose most challenging patient is mob boss Tony Soprano (James Gandolfini), a powerful, conflicted man with equally complicated issues and family ties.

HBO's agonizing-the-show, which won a total of 21 Emmys, including Outstanding Drama and Outstanding Direction.

In a recent phone interview, Bracco—in deadpan, frazed screamer for "Dreadful"—sarcastically revealed that she had felt "honored" to be a part of the acclaimed show, created by Emmy-winning writer and executive producer David Chase.

She had nothing but praise for her former cast mates and their characters. They were all "interesting and exciting," she said.

"It was so different," Bracco enthused. "The show was written so well and the characters were so [well-thought-out], that it made you step and say, 'Oh my, that's quite a different point of view!' Also, we showed fantasy for what it really was. In truth, all the writers had been in therapy, so they knew the games by heart. Dr. Melfi is a thoroughly educated Italian-American psychiatrist. She's so much smarter than Tony Soprano, so there's that special kind of attraction [between them]."

Did viewers of the show confide you with your character and ask you for advice at times?

They wanted to confess me. I laughed. I always told them that I was fully booked and I didn't have room for anyone. I told them to call Dr. Phil!

Did you expect Dr. Melfi to develop in a certain specific way?

No. The way the characters grew and the way the story was written, nothing was surprising that I expected. I think that's how David kept it very cohesive.

TAKE FIVE

Were you free to inject your own interpretations of the character?

We stuck to the script. We called that "record for record." We honored the script the way David wrote it.

How stressful or tough did it get for your character, and what does it say about Dawn?

All psychiatrists have psychiatrists, because [the job] is very, very stressful. All you do is listen to people's problems every day! It's absolutely a normal journey that they go to someone. I think, for her, he was a very motivating partner!

What do you miss the most about the show?

I miss being with the boys! I miss going to [Satriale's] and I miss having it all very familiar and knowing where I was going!

(Back-to-back episodes of "The Sopranos" air every Monday at 11 p.m. over HBO-Asia.)